

SLAVERY AND THE JEWS: THE CLAIMS OF THE NATION OF ISLAM

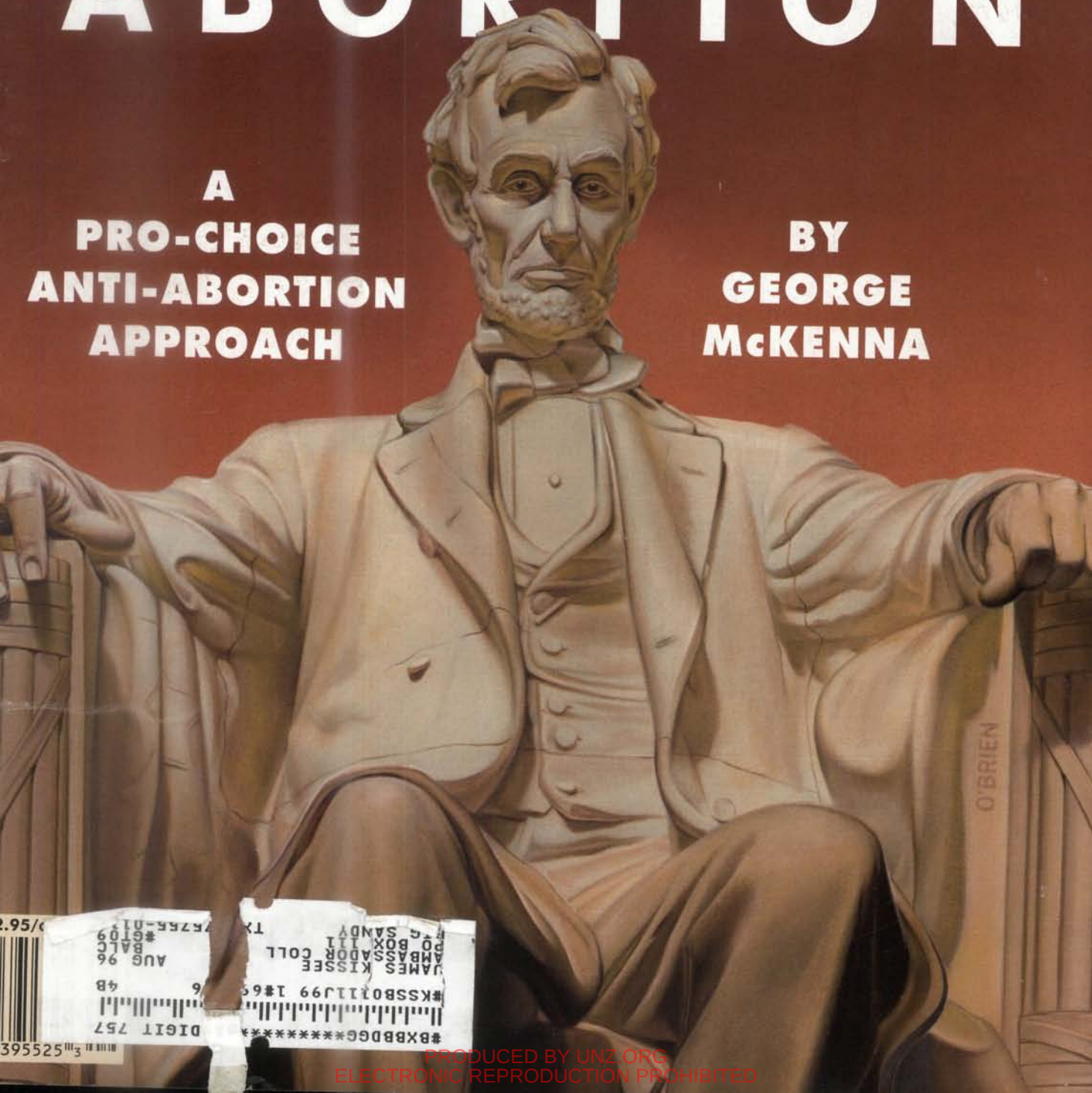
# The Atlantic Monthly

SEPTEMBER 1995

## HOW LINCOLN MIGHT HAVE DEALT WITH ABORTION

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ANTI-ABORTION  
APPROACH**

**BY  
GEORGE  
McKENNA**



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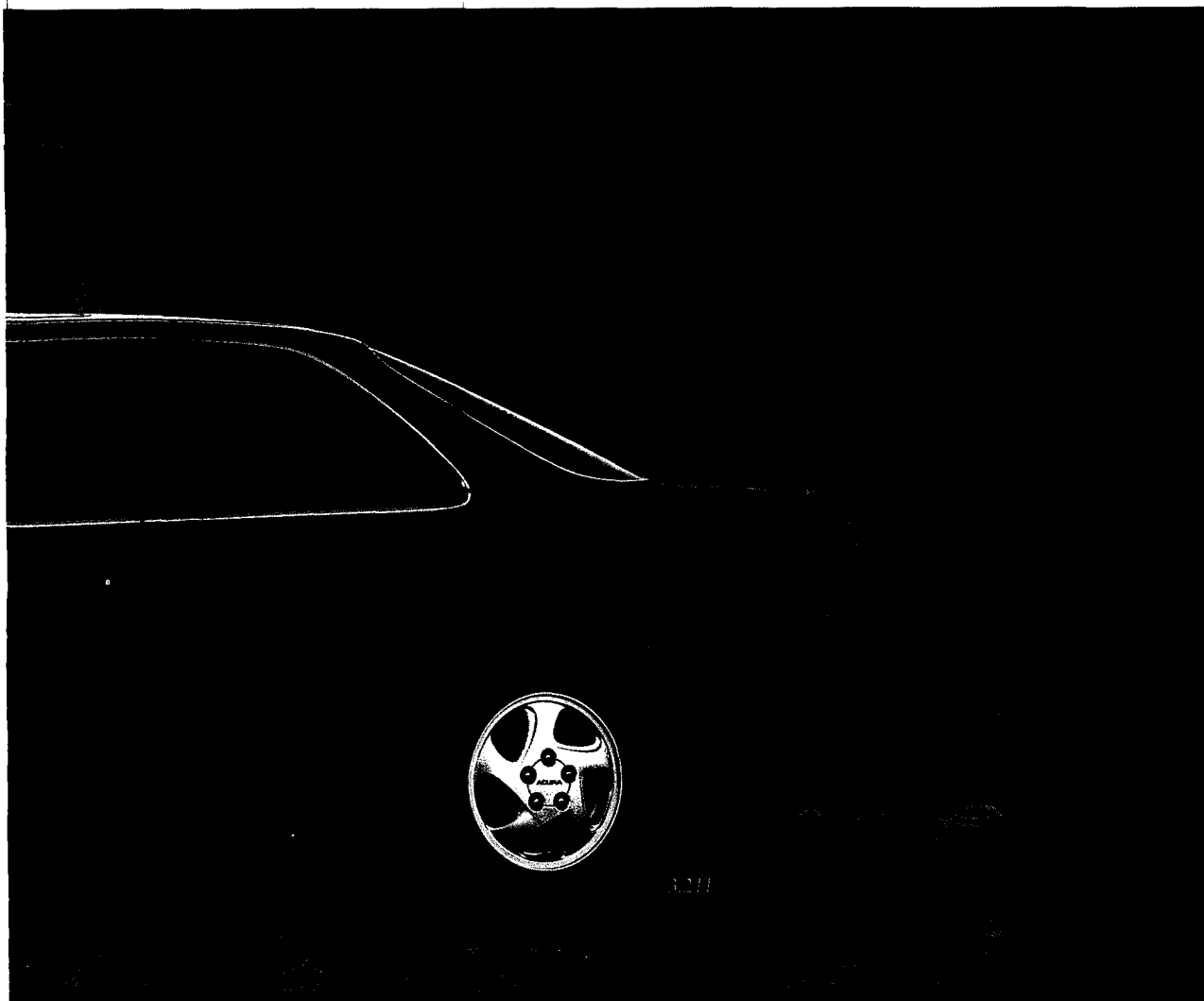


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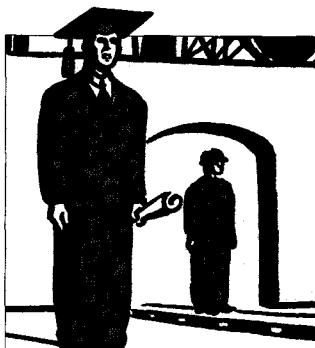
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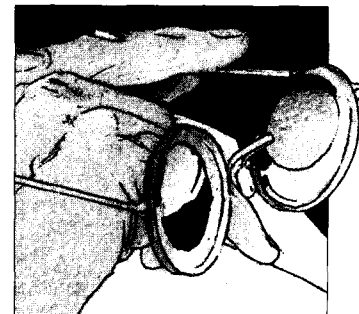
**A COMMITMENT TO  
A SET OF PRINCIPLES  
AND THE DIFFERENCE  
IT MAKES**



Page 84



Page 42



Page 23

## REPORTS

### 20 Notes & Comment: Raiding Nation

It is time to return to the template of prosperity that we abandoned eighty years ago.

### 23 Language: "Ulysses" in Chinese

Translating James Joyce's masterpiece is no picnic in French or Croatian, but Chinese presents special obstacles. Xiao Qian and Wen Jieruo were undaunted.

by Cait Murphy

### 30 Foreign Affairs: The Struggle to Govern Johannesburg

Eliminating apartheid at the national level was one thing. But the racial, political, and economic divisions that exist locally are as durable as they are odious.

by Lynda Schuster

## FICTION & POETRY

### 56 The Lather

A poem

by David Barber

### 72 Colonel Roebling's Friend

A short story

by Charles Dickinson

### 83 Two Poems

by Richard Wilbur

## 51 On Abortion: A Lincolnian Position

The argument over abortion is uncannily parallel, philosophically and rhetorically, with the argument over slavery in the years leading up to the Civil War. And, the author contends, "we can find in Lincoln's anti-slavery rhetoric a coherent position that could serve as a model for pro-life politicians today"—one that combines strenuous efforts to contain abortion with an acknowledgment of a woman's constitutional right to choose.

by George McKenna

## 84 The Great Sorting

In this second part of a two-part article the author describes how the Scholastic Aptitude Test—with a big assist during the Korean War from the U.S. military, which needed criteria for awarding draft deferments—emerged as a national standard for evaluating millions of people.

by Nicholas Lemann



## 92 A Display of Mackerel

A poem

by Mark Doty

## BOOKS

### 109 Slavery and the Jews

*The Secret Relationship  
Between Blacks and Jews*,  
by The Historical Research  
Department, The Nation of  
Islam

by Winthrop D. Jordan

### 114 The Moral State of Marriage

*The Best Is Yet to Come*,  
by Ivana Trump

*The Good Marriage*,  
by Judith S. Wallerstein and  
Sandra Blakeslee

by Barbara Dafoe  
Whitehead

### 119 Brief Reviews

by Phoebe-Lou Adams

## ARTS & LEISURE

### 42 Travel: Green-Hearted Italy

The best reason to visit Italy's Umbria region is the mystic landscape.

by Corby Kummer

### 104 Music: Unreconstructed Modernist

Making sense of Pierre Boulez, one of the most puzzling figures in the music of our time.

by David Schiff

## OTHER DEPARTMENTS

### 6 745 Boylston Street/ Contributors

### 8 Letters

### 18 The September Almanac

### 69 First Encounters

Henry Miller and  
George Orwell

by Edward Sorel and  
Nancy Caldwell Sorel

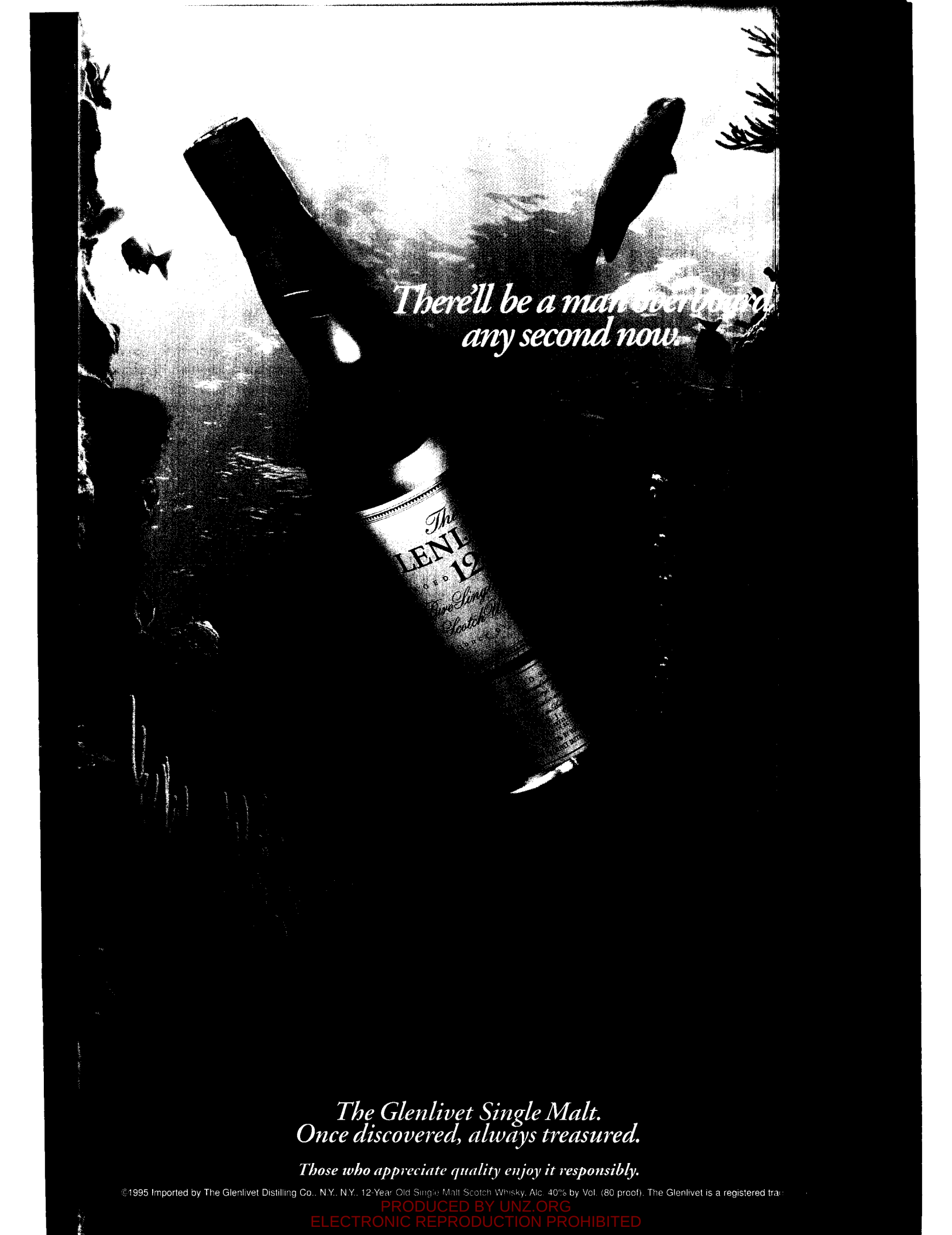
### 121 The Puzzler

by Emily Cox and  
Henry Rathvon

### 123 Word Watch

by Anne H. Soukhanov

Cover art by  
Tim O'Brien



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**T**HE first editors of *The Atlantic Monthly*, who were ardent abolitionists, did not initially favor Abraham Lincoln for the Republican nomination in 1860. It was hard to see in Lincoln, a failed Senate candidate from Illinois with a reputation for moderate views on how the nation should deal with slavery, the linements of the Great Emancipator. *The Atlantic's* candidate for the nomination had been William Henry Seward, who "represented the most advanced doctrines of his party"—that is to say, he was more radical than Lincoln on the issue of abolition. The editors disliked the idea of compromise with "the slave power." But as a practical matter they came around to Lincoln in the end. His willingness to countenance slavery where it already existed would perhaps mean that the threat of secession would recede. His opposition to the extension of slavery to the territories meant that the public fight against slavery would continue. In utterance Lincoln's denunciation of slavery remained eloquent and unequivocal.

"On Abortion: A Lincolnian Position," this month's cover story, explores the grounds of Lincoln's closely argued views on slavery, finding in them a political language and logic relevant to the most morally charged issue in American politics since slavery. George McKenna, a political scientist at the City College of New York, first conceived the idea for this article

while studying the Lincoln-Douglas senatorial debates of 1858—debates preceding the election that Lincoln lost. "What you might call the morphology of the debate over the extension of slavery to the new territories," McKenna says, "was strikingly similar to the current debate over abortion."

Among the parallels he sees:

- Lincoln and Douglas agreed that slavery was a moral issue, but to Douglas, as to proponents of abortion rights today, the central question was an essentially private one. Lincoln perceived a great public dimension that transcended the sphere of merely private choice.

- Douglas showed little interest in whether a slave was a person. Lincoln, like pro-lifers today, argued that the question of personhood was paramount.

But Lincoln did not want to make slavery illegal: that would tear the country apart. He wanted, rather, to stop its spread, and to hope and work for the day when moral suasion and public sentiment would accomplish what had not been accomplished in law. Ultimately, of course, this position proved untenable—in the matter of slavery. But McKenna argues that Lincoln's initial approach to slavery offers a model that politicians who want to heal the divisions in the country over abortion should follow. —THE EDITORS

### CONTRIBUTORS

**David Barber** ("The Lather") is the assistant poetry editor of *The Atlantic*. His first book of poems, *The Spirit Level*, was awarded the 1995 Terrence Des Pres Prize and will be published later this year.

**Charles Dickinson** ("Colonel Roebeling's Friend") is an editor at *The Chicago Tribune* and the author of the novels *The Widows' Adventures* (1989) and *Rumor Has It* (1991).

**Mark Doty** ("A Display of Mackerel") is a former Guggenheim fellow. His 1993 collection, *My Alexandria*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for poetry. His latest book of poems, *Atlantis*, will be published next month.

**Winthrop D. Jordan** ("Slavery and the Jews"), who for twenty years was a professor of history at the University of California at Berkeley, now holds the William F. Winter chair of history and of African-American studies at the University of Mississippi. His books *White Over Black: Amer-*

*ican Attitudes Toward the Negro* (1968) and *Tumult and Silence at Second Creek: An Inquiry Into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy* (1993) both won the Bancroft Prize.

**Nicholas Lemann** ("The Great Sorting") is a national correspondent for *The Atlantic* and the author of *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (1991). He is at work on a book about meritocracy in the United States.

**George McKenna** ("On Abortion: A Lincolnian Position") teaches political science at the City College of New York. His books include *A Guide to the Constitution: That Delicate Balance* (1984) and *The Drama of Democracy* (1994).

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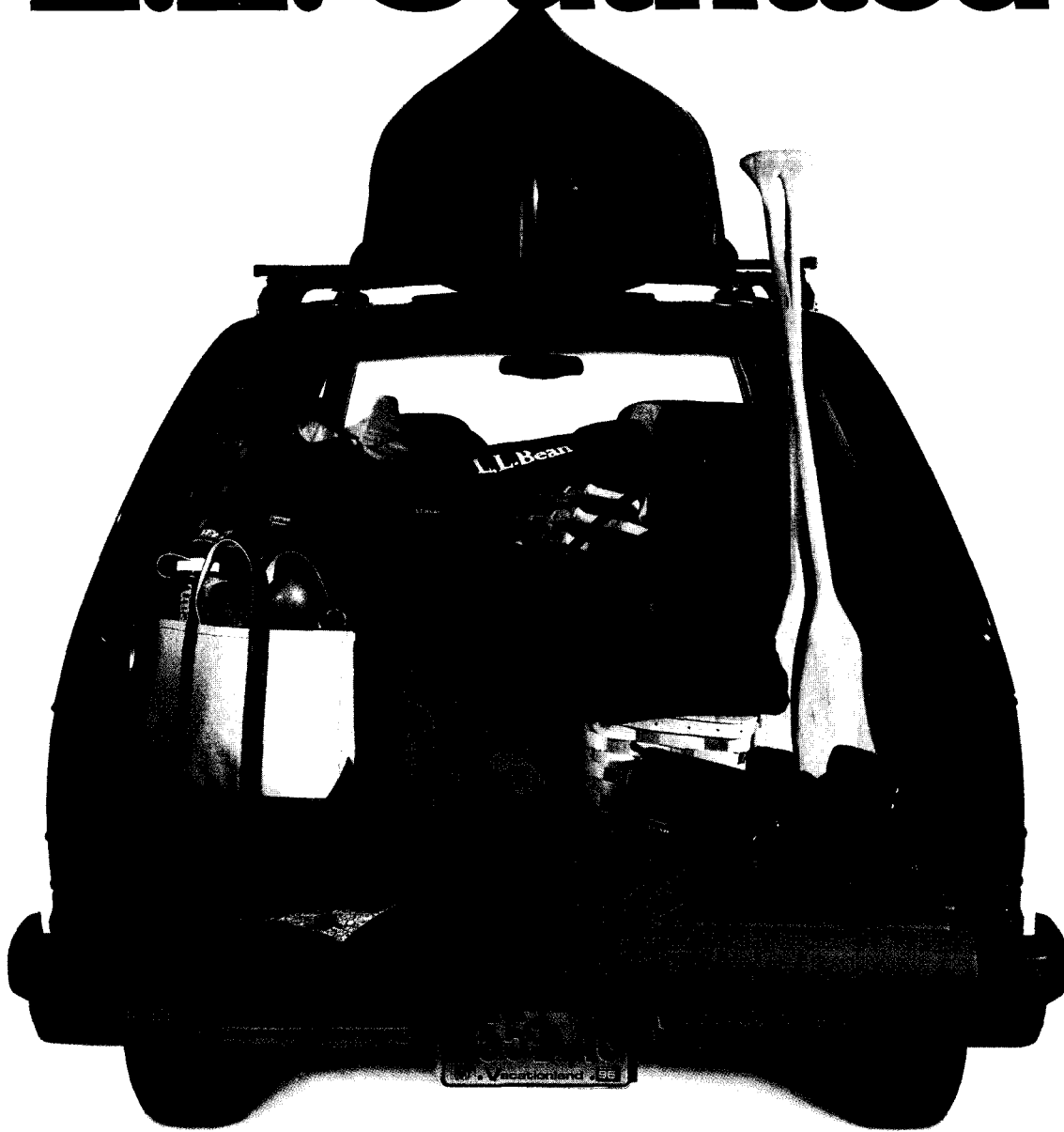
**David Schiff** ("Unreconstructed Modernist") is a composer and a professor of music at Reed College, in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of *The Music of Elliott Carter* (1983), and is at work on a book about *Rhapsody in Blue*.

**Lynda Schuster** ("The Struggle to Govern Johannesburg") is a journalist who has reported from Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Middle East for *The Wall Street Journal*, and from South Africa for *The Christian Science Monitor*.

**Barbara Daboe Whitehead** ("The Moral State of Marriage") is a guest scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in Washington, D.C. Her most recent cover story for *The Atlantic* was "The Failure of Sex Education" (October, 1994).

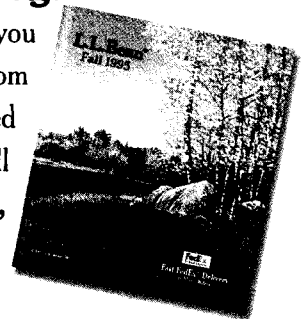
**Richard Wilbur** ("Two Poems") served as poet laureate of the United States in 1987. His translation of Molière's *Amphitryon* was published last spring.

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## LETTERS

### Saving Social Security

**T**he Atlantic is surely entitled to argue ("How to Save Social Security," June Atlantic) that the way to "save" Social Security is to slash it. But you call raising the retirement age and lowering the inflation adjustment for benefits "painless." They're not.

Let's take a look at the arithmetic. In 2005, the year in which you propose to increase the retirement age from sixty-six (under current law) to seventy, the average sixty-six-year-old will have a life expectancy of about seventeen years. Thus raising the retirement age by four years will wipe out almost a quarter of the average sixty-six-year-old retiree's Social Security benefits. That's a pretty huge reduction.

It's even worse than that for the many moderate- and low-income workers in their mid-sixties who are simply worn out after spending a lifetime doing hard physical work—and who tend to die sooner than the well-off. For example, a laborer with a life expectancy of only ten years at age sixty-six would lose 40 percent of his or her Social Security benefits under your proposed boost in the retirement age.

Then there's your plan to reduce Social Security benefits by letting inflation erode their real value—a step that, you insist to current retirees, "will not cut your payments" but "will slow the rate by which they increase." If you reduce inflation indexing by, say, one percent a year, then over ten years a typical Social Security recipient will see an inflation-adjusted cut in benefits of about \$4,300—equal to about half a year's worth of average benefits in today's dollars. That's \$4,300 less in real food, clothing, and shelter that Social Security checks will buy over the ten years.

So how is all this "painless"? Well, I suppose it might seem relatively pain-free for well-off people who don't expect

to retire until they're seventy anyway and for whom \$400 or \$500 a year is a bagatelle. But that description hardly fits most Americans.

**Robert S. McIntyre**  
Director, Citizens for Tax Justice  
Washington, D.C.

**I** recommend a simple but important refinement to your recommendation on how to save Social Security. Don't wait ten years to raise the minimum age for receiving Social Security payments to seventy; begin to raise the age for receiving payments one month a year every year until the system is in balance.

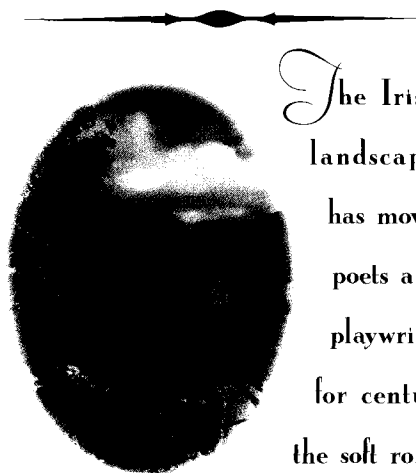
You are quite right about giving people "time to plan." This same principle should be applied to other important matters such as changes in the tax laws. If, for example, one wanted to institute a taxation system in which each dollar was taxed at the same rate and in which there were no deductions, present taxpayers could be given the option of staying with the current system or changing to the new system. That option could extend for ten or twenty or even thirty years, so that plans that had been constructed on the basis of the present tax system would not be unfairly disrupted.

Such gradualism has been denied us at great cost and on the basis that one Congress cannot pass laws binding upon the next Congress. It is true that the next Congress may have an entirely different composition and wish to undo the perceived mischief of preceding Congresses. Whether this represents desirable flexibility or intolerable vacillation may depend upon whether you are a member of the gray and retiring or the young and at work.

But it is certainly clear that we must take a longer perspective than that of the two-year congressional term if we are to avoid generational conflicts, and Social Security is one of the most pressing.

**John R. Dykers Jr.**  
Siler City, N.C.

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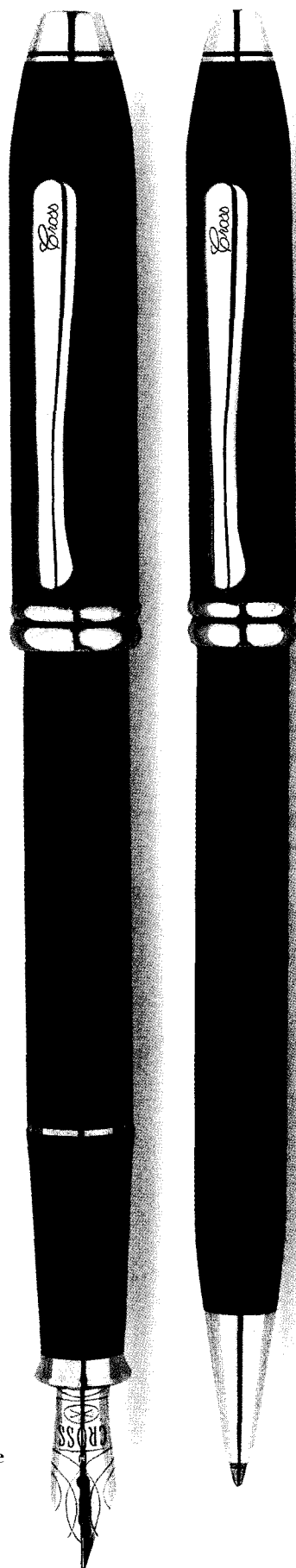


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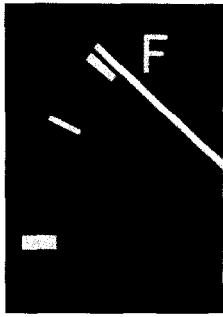


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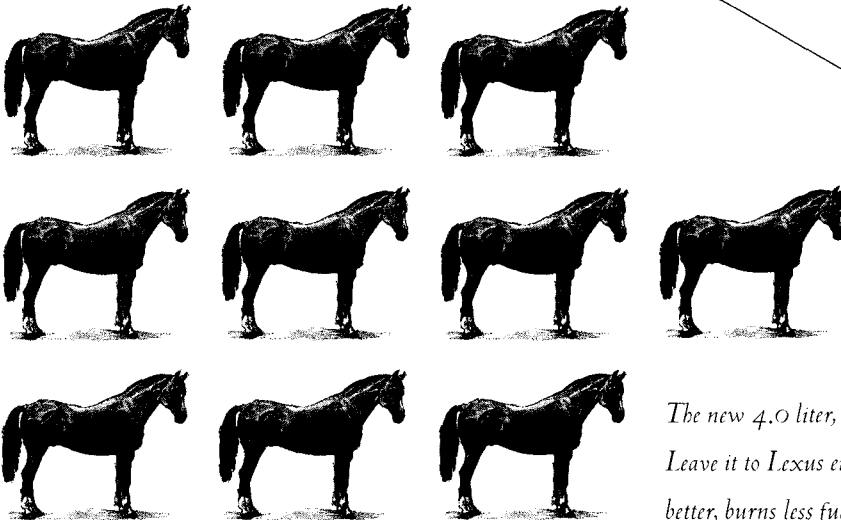
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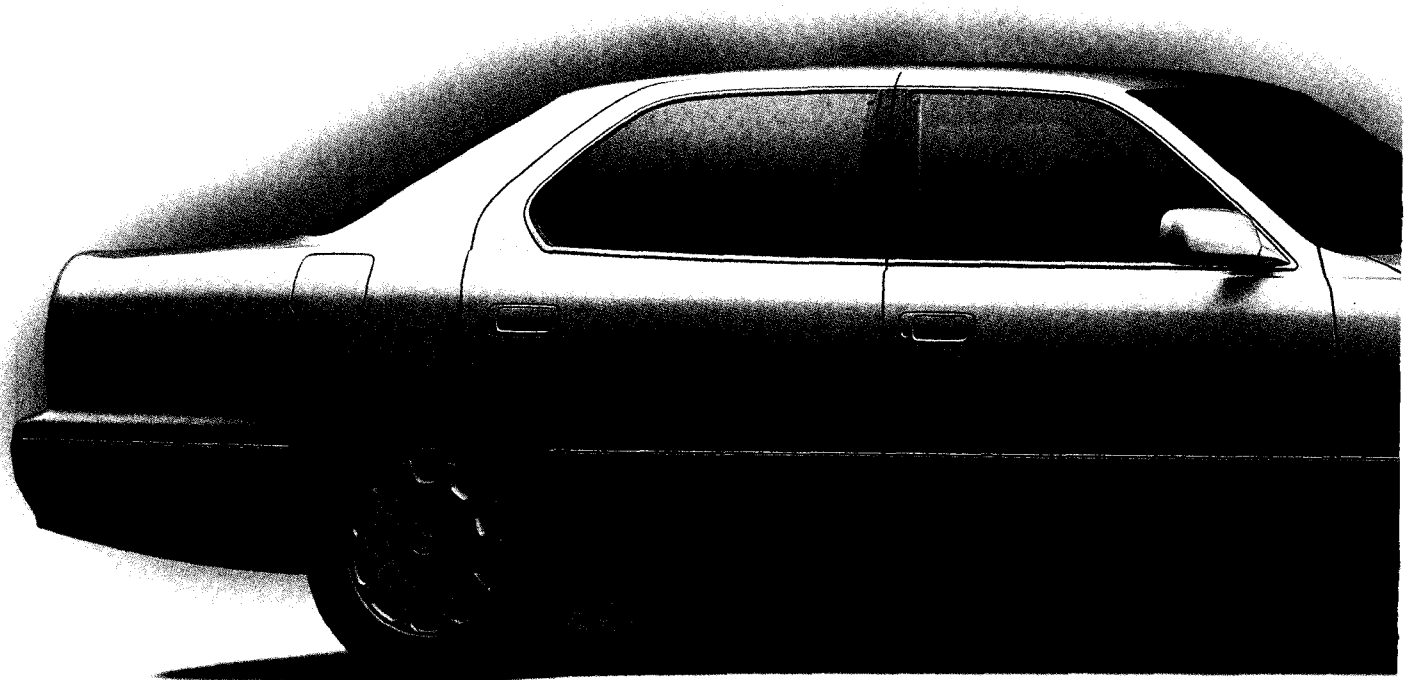




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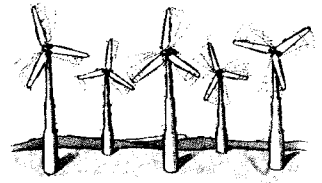
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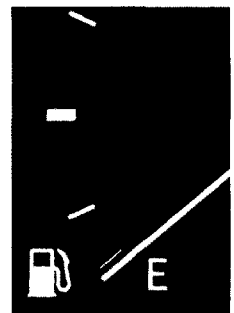


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**The Atlantic Monthly**

## Delayed Childbearing

**G**ina Maranto's laudable article ("Delayed Childbearing," June *Atlantic*) recommends that "America put its money where its mouth is on family values." I couldn't agree more. But we need to go even further than she suggests. Though it appears otherwise, the career-family dilemma is beyond the realm of the individual woman employee. Maternity leave, parental leave, and excellent child care are all essential supports if family values are to be taken seriously. In addition, work itself needs to be restructured. Felice Schwartz got clobbered for suggesting special treatment for mothers, but unless corporate America can comprehend that the well-being of the next generations will determine the fate of our nation ("economy" might be more meaningful), nothing will change. Although some shifts are occurring, the individualistic, competitive nature of career advancement makes it difficult for talented, competent, responsible women to take time off for childbearing if they have an interest in advancement. They can't have babies and guard their territory at work too.

Work assignment by project, rather than the traditional up-the-ladder approach, would help, as would tax breaks for child care and other family-related expenses. The emphasis should be on a woman's competence to accomplish her assignments, not her seniority or ability to fence off her empire. I understand that people who choose a career over children resent the inconvenience of motherhood (or fatherhood) on the job, and I can see their point. However, to deal with the deep problems facing both business and families, we need to take a bigger, more creative view of the workplace. If talented women could have babies in their twenties and know that they weren't hopelessly off the career track, it would be an easier decision for them.

**Nina Boyd Krebs**  
Sacramento, Calif.

**A**s a former infertility patient and a woman who waited "too long" to conceive, I was struck by the following sentence in Gina Maranto's article: "In the bulk of cases, infertility specialists have found, older women who fail to become

pregnant using embryos made with their own eggs succeed when the eggs come from a younger donor."

My question is, Can this possibly be true? To me, the word "bulk" implies a majority, and a substantial one at that. Is this what Maranto actually means to say?

The practice we used, Marrs/Vargyas, in Santa Monica, California, told us last year that their success rate stood at 36 percent (though recently it has been running at 58 percent), and I know that Mark Sauer also had a success rate of 36 percent for several years there. A 36 percent take-home-baby rate, while high, does not, to me, constitute the "bulk" of patients. One person I know, a forty-two-year-old woman who is currently pregnant courtesy of donor eggs, says that her physician's rate is now over 50 percent.

Does Gina Maranto have any idea what the actual rate is?

**Catherine Johnson**  
Studio City, Calif.

**C**alling on "society" to enable women to delay careers instead of their childbearing sounds nice but will not get the job done.

Let's face it: If they could, employers would eliminate most employee-rights laws, including the Family and Medical Leave Act's limited unpaid leave. They tend to look to short-term profit rather than to the long-term benefits (even financial ones) of a happier and more stable work force.

The exemplary paid family-and-medical-leave policies of European countries did not come about because one employer took the lead and others followed. Politicians created them through laws. In such an environment employers eventually adjust to make similar profits, but only when everyone else is required to follow the rules also.

The only way "society" can eliminate delays in childbearing is to cause delays in the re-election of our representatives in Washington who oppose eliminating them. Until then it is all just talk.

**Don D. Sessions**  
Mission Viejo, Calif.

**A**s Gina Maranto correctly asserts, conception is more difficult for women to achieve once they reach their thirties. The medical evidence for that is quite convincing. She is also right that family-



Kurt Vonnegut

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friendly policies in the workplace would make the transition to parenthood much easier for young women. However, the article implies that most, if not all, women who delay childbearing do so for voluntary, career-related reasons and that the medical community should counsel them against such delay. I am afraid this has the potential to create more problems than it solves.

Today many women remain unmarried during their twenties. In fact, two thirds of those aged twenty to twenty-four have never wed. The same is true for one third of those aged twenty-five to twenty-nine. So, unless we want to encourage unwed motherhood, childbirth is simply not an option for many young women. I suppose an argument could be made that voluntary, career-related reasons have kept them from marrying. But we could equally argue that they have just not been lucky enough to find an appropriate partner. Second marriages also present difficulties for the "earlier is better" thesis. Nearly half of all marriages each year are remarriages, and the average remarrying bride is in her early thirties. In spite of their age, many of these people will want children with their new spouses.

Then there is the issue of divorce. Regardless of how one feels about it, the fact is that currently half of all marriages end in divorce, and the highest rates, by far, are among young people. Since arguably the worst effects of divorce accrue to children, a case could be made for advocating that a couple not have children until their marriage has stabilized to the point that divorce appears unlikely. This would put a considerable number of would-be parents well into their thirties. I'm not necessarily recommending such an approach. I merely wish to suggest that an overemphasis on the "biologically correct" age for childbearing can have unintended, and potentially negative, consequences.

**Paula Mergenhagen**  
Nashville, Tenn.

*Gina Maranto replies:*

Regarding egg-donation success rates: by "bulk" I did indeed mean "majority." According to my *American Heritage Dictionary*, the word means "the major portion or greater part." Richard Paulson and Mark Sauer's pioneering infertility group at the University of Southern Cali-

fornia (Sauer has just left the program for Columbia University) has achieved consistently high success rates for egg donation. Paulson tells me that at present well over 50 percent of women entering the program specifically for the procedure go home with babies. Dorothy Mitchell-Leef, in Atlanta, also reports a take-home-baby rate above 50 percent, and says that top programs around the country are averaging 45 to 55 percent. As Catherine Johnson no doubt knows, rates vary considerably among practices, for reasons that are not always identifiable. The Society for Advanced Reproductive Technology, just now issuing results from 1993, calculated a 31.3 percent average per-cycle success rate for egg donation for that year. The caveat is that that figure reflects the well-known fact that many infertility specialists offer procedures because their patients demand them, whether or not the physicians themselves have had any success performing those procedures. This drags the national average down.

Paula Mergenhagen appears to have misunderstood me. I singled out women's need to establish themselves professionally as one important—but certainly not the only—factor in the delayed-childbearing trend. I also mentioned that the tendency to marry later and have children at a later age has dominated Western societies for some 200 years, the obvious implication being that many women today exemplify the phenomenon. I would hardly advocate that women rush en masse into single motherhood—nor do I think my piece even intimated such a thing. My point, and the point of the physicians speaking out on the subject, was not to argue that all women must have their children in their twenties but rather to expose some received wisdom as not terribly wise, and to suggest that women take the medical facts into consideration insofar as their life circumstances permit. As for divorce, although it hovers around 50 percent in the United States these days, one suspects that few couples actively intend that their marriage will fail, and it seems unreasonable to suggest that everyone wait to have children until their supposed risk of divorce has diminished to nil. At what point would Ms. Mergenhagen declare a marriage stable enough to pass the test? Five years? Ten? Twenty?

## Diversity Myth

In "The Diversity Myth: America's Leading Export" (May *Atlantic*), Benjamin Schwarz says that the Civil War was a failure of democracy. There are a lot of Americans who still believe that the United States fought and won the Civil War in order that "government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." But to Schwarz that would be "the hortatory version of our history."

Schwarz would have it that northern expansionism caused both the Mexican War and the Civil War: "To [John Quincy] Adams . . . there was, of course, no doubt that America should effect this imperial union. . . . By 1846 America was ready to pounce." But John Quincy Adams fought in Congress to *prevent* the annexation of Texas, which was what sparked the Mexican War. The chief opposition to the Mexican War came from the same group that supported the Civil War fifteen years later, and for the same reason: opposition to slavery.

In Schwarz's view, racial and financial power run this country, and moral principle is an "abstract and bloodless notion." But our trust in individual wisdom, imperfectly and inconsistently though we may live it, sets us profoundly apart from many other nations in our own time, and it set us apart from almost all nations in 1861. If that principle doesn't always, or even usually, prevail, it is still at the core of this nation.

In the democracy of Lincoln and Jefferson, military and financial power are in service of that vision. Schwarz gives us a different model; his typical American of 1790 is John Jay, who said, "A country should be run by the people who own it." The United States has held on to Jefferson's ideal, even though much of the time it has taken the path of Jay. Schwarz's failure to acknowledge the still-radical implications of our deeper national vision and its power for good is a hole at the center of his view of this country.

**Jonathan Hale**  
Watertown, Mass.

*Benjamin Schwarz replies:*

Contrary to Jonathan Hale's assertion, I did not state that northern expansionism "caused" the Mexican War. John Quincy



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Adams, whom I quoted in my article, envisioned the expansion of the United States over North America. This belief that the country had a "manifest destiny" to expand over the continent was common among political leaders, both northern and southern, in the United States. Adams did oppose the annexation of Texas, but not because he was opposed to U.S. expansionism per se. Rather, his opposition was based on his fear that if Texas were annexed in 1845, political power within the United States would shift to the South.

I can't accept Mr. Hale's moralistic interpretation of the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln repeatedly asserted that the issue at stake was the preservation of the Union (a union in which the North held political preponderance)—not the abolition of slavery. The issue that divided the country at the time of the 1860 election, and that sparked the Civil War, was the extension of slavery into the territories, not its abolition.

Mr. Hale also quotes me out of context. I never wrote that moral principle was "an abstract and bloodless notion." I said that many nation-states that are based on ethnic or religious identity would regard the civil state as "an abstract and bloodless notion."

John Jay was not a typical American—any more than were Lincoln and Jefferson. I quoted Jay's statement from the *Federalist*, a collection of papers that most historians and political theorists regard as the most profound and original American contribution to political thought. Jay was a central figure in the framing and defense of the Constitution, and hence was an important architect of the system of government under which we live. Incidentally, Jay's notions of the relationship of property ownership to political power were held by all the founding fathers.

Finally, I don't dispute the point Mr. Hale makes about the importance of American ideals. To me, however, the central—and tragic—fact of our history is that we are a nation haunted by the chasm between our ideals and our deeds. Enraptured by a vision of what we ought to be, America has for 200 years yearned, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "to live out the true meaning of its creed." Mr. Hale's view of America largely ignores this ambiguity.

## New England Fisheries

Deborah Cramer's article on Georges Bank fisheries ("Troubled Waters," June *Atlantic*) is excellent, readable, and on the spot. However, she is not sufficiently forceful when writing "To preserve New England's fisheries, it will be essential to set quotas that are designed to protect the health of a fishery, not the short-term economic needs of fishermen." In order to preserve fisheries, two fundamental changes are needed. First, there must be a shift in the way people think about fisheries from a focus on the yield (biological or economic) to a focus on the health of the fish stock. Second, we require means to implement this shift, in a manner that embraces, rather than ignores, the great uncertainty of the natural and human worlds. Recent work by my colleagues Tim Lauck, Colin Clark, and Gordon Munro, at the University of British Columbia, and me has shown that a practicable idea is a reserve system, whereby large areas in which the fish population resides are *never* accessible to fishing pressure. Our calculations suggest that in order to protect stocks, harvested regions should generally be no more than 20 to 30 percent of the total area occupied by the stock. The result may be disquieting, but it has more comfort than the economic extinction of all the fisheries in the world.

**Marc Mangel**

*University of California at Davis  
Davis, Calif.*

Deborah Cramer is absolutely correct when she places blame for the destruction of the New England groundfishery resource on the politicized, self-serving New England Fishery Management Council, which has ignored science for a short-term gain, and destroyed a precious national resource. Sadly, all fisheries have been tainted by this terrible example.

For almost twenty years the management of our federal fisheries has been left to such regional councils, with varying results. A study by the World Wildlife Fund found them riddled with conflicts of interest. (Interestingly, current law exempts these fishery councils from conflict-of-interest statutes that apply to every other part of the federal government.)

The current management system has also been a disaster from the economic

point of view. The Commerce Department estimates that U.S. marine fisheries are producing far below their potential, at a cost of more than \$3 billion a year to the U.S. economy.

Fortunately, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has managed the waters off Alaska very conservatively, with separate quotas for each species. North Pacific groundfish quotas have always been set below what scientists say is safe to harvest while sustaining the fishery. As opposed to New England's shameful taking of 60 percent of the resource, cited by Cramer, annual groundfish quotas in the Bering Sea average 11.6 percent. The result is an abundant fishery that has actually grown by more than four million metric tons since the council began to manage it, in 1977. Some species, such as flatfish, have actually quadrupled.

Unfortunately, although the total quota is set wisely, there are too many boats chasing that quota. This results in shorter seasons and more dangerous and wasteful fishing. Individual quotas, a system in which each fisherman is awarded a percentage of the total quota to be fished year round, would allow the harvest of the North Pacific to proceed more rationally. When individual quotas are transferable, and can be bought, sold, or leased (or revoked for bad fishing behavior), fishermen have incentives to care for the resource over the long term rather than squander it. Had individual, transferable quotas been in place in New England, there would very likely be enough cod, haddock, and yellowtail for future generations.

**Joseph R. Blum**

*Executive Director  
American Factory Trawler Association  
Seattle, Wash.*

Deborah Cramer's ignorance of economics is appalling. As every schoolboy knows, overfishing creates *shortages*, shortages lead to *rising prices*, and rising prices create *incentives* for more individual fish to grow to maturity and spawn. In a genuinely free market, without the dead hand of government interference, it's a self-correcting problem. And it's the same story in the case of dinosaurs and petroleum.

**John F. Hellegers**

*Jenkintown, Pa.*



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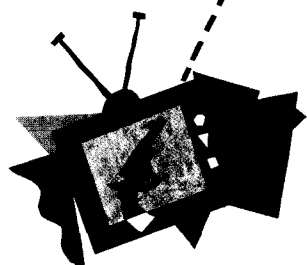
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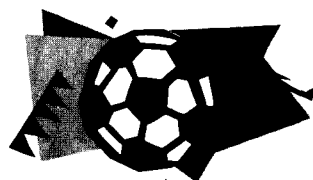


## Arts & Letters

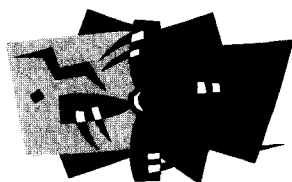
This month the UCLA Center for Communication Policy will release the first of three annual reports on violence in television entertainment programming. The reports were commissioned by the major networks, at a total cost of \$1.5 million, in response to congressional pressure; as a result of their sponsorship, the networks will, presumably, be unable to distance themselves from any thorny conclusions or recommendations. Instead of simply counting the violent acts in a given show or time period—the approach historically taken by media-watchdog groups—the reports will evaluate qualitative issues such as the extent and nature of the violence, the motivation for and consequences of it, and the context and manner in which it is portrayed. Among the genres to be assessed are children's programs, prime-time shows, made-for-television and theatrical movies, PBS programs, home video rentals, and video games.

## Health & Safety

September brings the opening of soccer season and a reminder that soccer injuries can be more serious than simply a kick on the shin. The chief cause of fatal injuries: falling goalposts, which have killed at least 21 people in the United States since 1979. Most of the accidents have involved unanchored homemade goals, including ones assembled by high school shop classes and

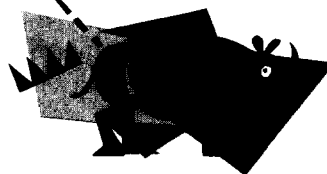


community businesses; they have prompted the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to issue new guidelines for the design, use, storage, and setup of movable goals. September 1, a new Federal Aviation Administration rule establishing minimum combined experience levels for two pilots flying together takes effect. At least one crew member must have 75 or more hours of experience flying the type of plane at hand. In addition, if one pilot has fewer than 100 hours of flight time in that type of plane, the senior pilot must make all takeoffs and landings in hazardous weather and at particularly hazardous airports.



## Environment

September 1, the largest wind-power plant in the United States outside California goes into operation today. The 35-megawatt Windplant, in Culberson County, Texas, is expected to provide 120,000 megawatt-hours annually to the Lower Colorado River Authority and the city of Austin—enough to power 19 Fenway Parks for a season. Most of the nation's approximately 16,000 wind turbines are in California, but in at least 14 other states across the country wind-power plants are now in operation, under construction, or planned. Recent technological advances have made the costs of operating wind farms comparable to those of running conventional fossil-fuel plants, and the industry predicts that the cost of wind power will continue to drop. This year the federal government allocated nearly \$50 million to research and development on wind energy—an increase of 63 percent over 1994.

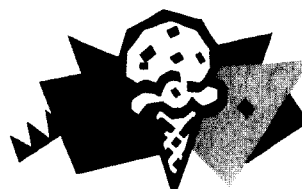


## Government

September 1, a Texas ban on the "canned hunting" of exotic animals—in which hunters kill a caged or just-released animal—takes effect today. Texas is the center of this activity, which generally involves animals of breeds native to Africa and Asia but born and raised on Texas ranches or bought, usually indirectly, from zoos. Outfitters sell the opportunity to "hunt" these animals for as much as \$10,000 each. 29, starting today the Riegle-Neal Interstate Banking and Branching Efficiency Act takes effect, allowing any adequately capitalized and managed bank holding company to acquire banks in other states. Ultimately the law will also allow banks to establish interstate branches. Proponents of the act cite the potential convenience for consumers who work or travel across state lines; they also argue that the act could help to forestall a repeat of the bank failures of the 1980s, if enough banks expand geographically and diversify their risks.

## Food

September 14, starting today the term "ice cream" takes on new meaning, as revisions to the Food and Drug Administration's definition of it go into effect. Ice milk will now be labeled "reduced-fat," "low-fat," or "nonfat" ice cream; in addition, ice cream sweetened with anything other than nutritive carbohydrate sweeteners (honey, sugar, corn syrup, and the like) must include the sweetener in its



name. The latter requirement will be in force for only three years, after which time consumers will presumably be savvy enough to check the ingredients list for artificial sweeteners. It applies to all types of ice cream, giving rise to complaints about pending "label litter": shoppers might well be confronted with "Reduced-fat goat-milk ice cream sweetened with NutraSweet and saccharin."

## The Skies

September 1-2, just at midnight EDT the Moon passes near Jupiter overhead. 8-9, Full Moon, also known this month as the Fruit or Dying Grass Moon. Because this year it is slightly closer to the Autumnal Equinox than October's full Moon, it can also be called the Harvest Moon. 20, Jupiter lies north of Antares, the bright red star at the heart of the constellation Scorpius. 23, at 8:14 A.M. EDT, the Autumnal Equinox: summer ends.

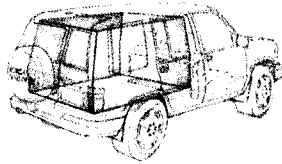


## 75 Years Ago

Louis Bartlett, writing in the September, 1920, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "It is being seen more and more clearly that the community as a whole is interested in the welfare of each individual, and that, as the condition of one class improves, the condition of the entire community is bettered. We have not gone very far along this road, but the dependence of all upon each is being more clearly recognized each day. We see that causes operating injuriously to one class will presently affect all. The world is in the situation of the man who, when his wife had indigestion, took a pill, on the sound theory that, having eaten the same thing, he would have the indigestion sooner or later."

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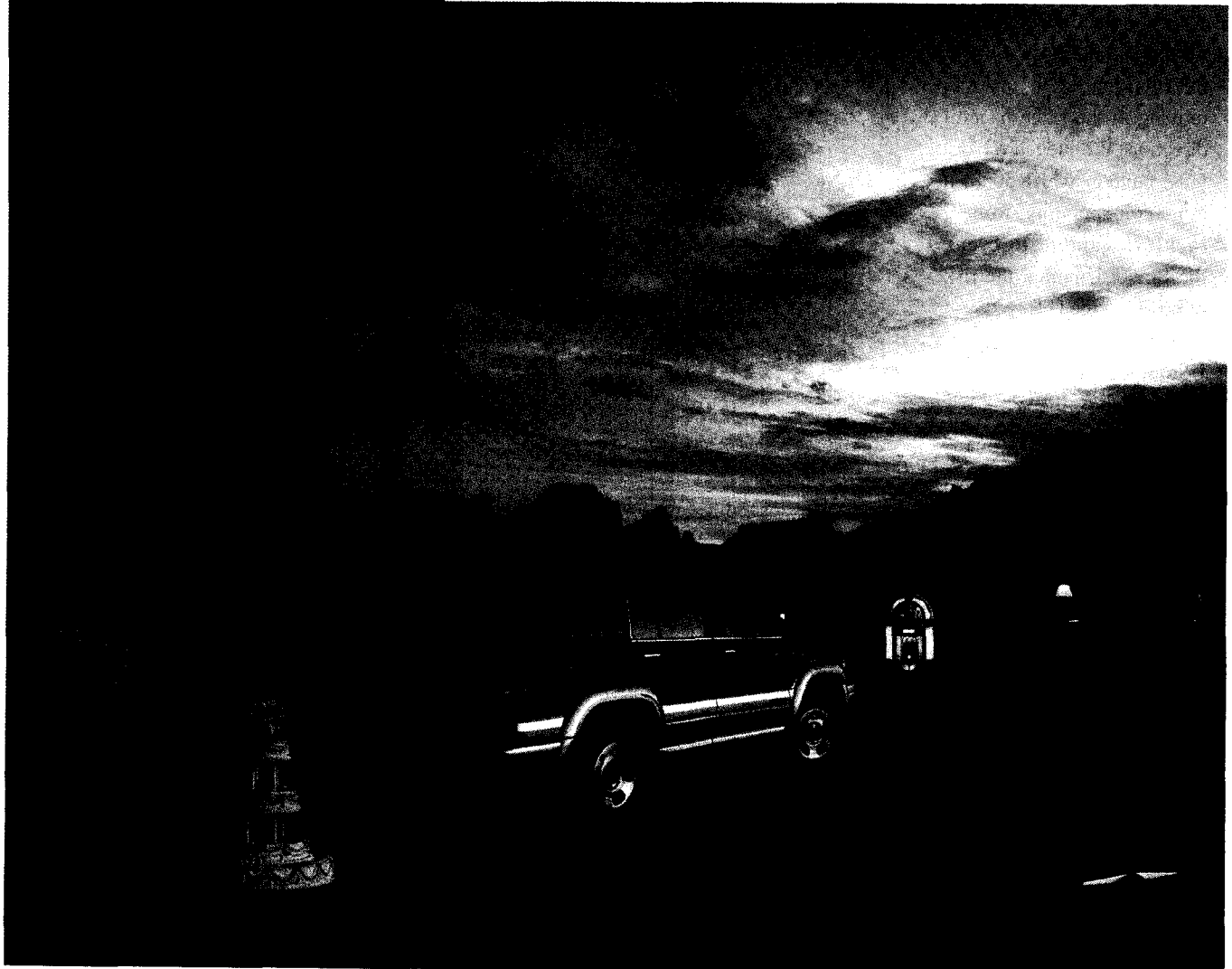
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# Raiding Nation

*"When the forts of folly fall, find thy body by the wall"*

—THE LAST WORD, BY MATTHEW ARNOLD

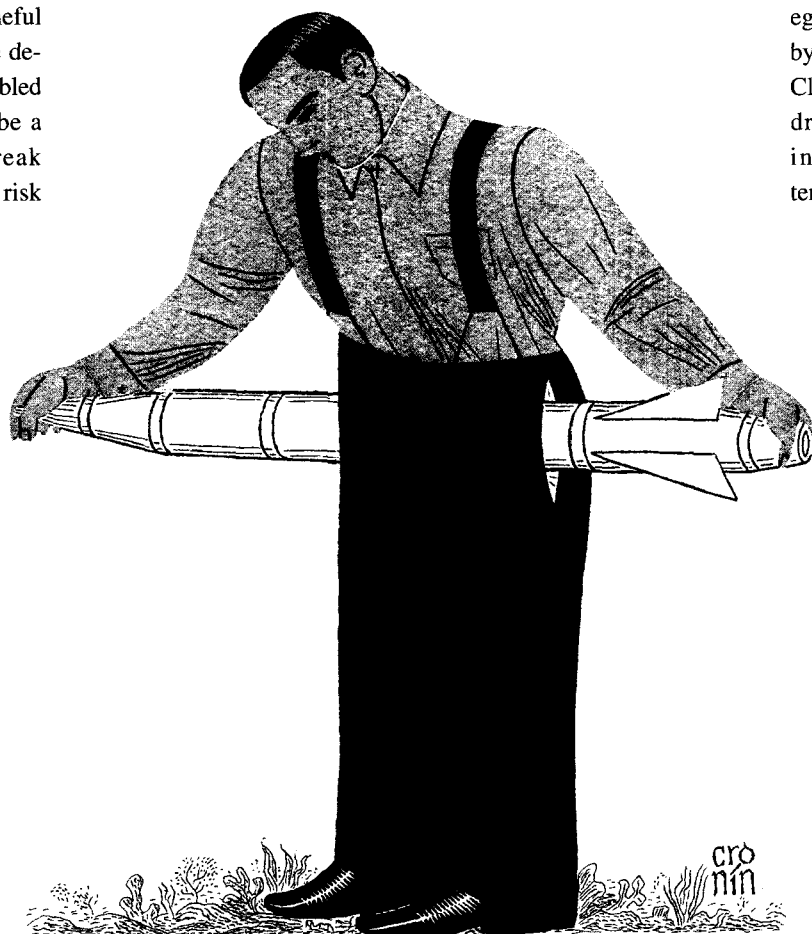
**T**HE forts of folly we have in mind are those represented by supply-side economics and the unprecedented structural budget deficit that resulted from, to quote the former senator Howard H. Baker, a Republican, that "riverboat gamble" with the economy. The effects of this largest peacetime deficit in America's history are still being debated, but there is general agreement on its two main causes: Ronald Reagan's tax cuts and his defense buildup. Throughout the 1980s *The Atlantic* examined the evidence for and against each of these policies. In a series of articles, beginning with William Greider's 1981 "The Education of David Stockman," the magazine found that tax cuts were stimulating consumption at the expense of saving and investment, and worsening social inequality at a time when the international economy was moving in the same baneful direction. We judged the defense buildup, which doubled Pentagon spending, to be a reckless gamble to break the Soviet Union at the risk of breaking the U.S. budget. The Soviet Union was broken, though just how much the buildup contributed we leave to the historians. But, coupled with the tax cuts, the buildup did indeed break the budget.

The point of this look back at the past fifteen years? When the deficit is at last brought under control, and the budget at last balanced, as President Bill Clinton and Speaker Newt Gingrich now

both pledge will happen—as this fort of folly falls, in 2002 or 2005—Americans of that more solvent future will find *The Atlantic's* body by the wall. On the deficit we have fought the good fight.

That gives us standing to complain about Clinton's embrace of Gingrich's drive to balance the budget. We approve the melody but not the lyrics. To repeat, the deficit had two causes: tax cuts, directed chiefly at the most affluent Americans, and the defense buildup. Yet neither tax increases nor defense cuts figure in the Clinton deficit-reduction scenario. Absent tax increases to help balance the budget, Clinton will almost certainly have to make socially irresponsible cuts in the safety net for the poor and the health-security system for the elderly. Absent the reorientation of U.S. defense strategy that was made possible by the end of the Cold War, Clinton will be unable to address the second of what in the 1992 campaign he termed "twin deficits."

This is the "investment deficit." The phrase refers to the investments in physical infrastructure and human capital that were not made in the 1980s because the tax cuts and the defense buildup did not leave sufficient resources and because Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush did not believe government should make them. These forgone domestic investments are to tomorrow's econo-



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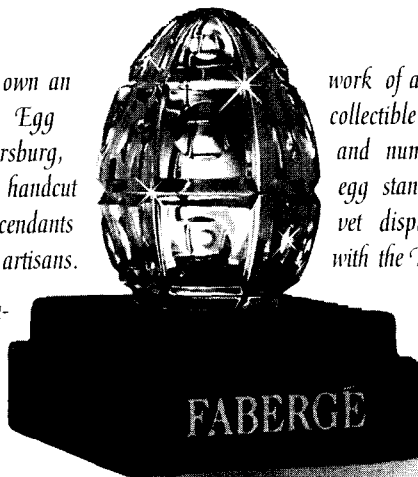
"Morning workout." Emily Stoddard on the frozen shoreline of Lake Tahoe. Photo: John Kelly  
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my what the interstate highway system and the GI Bill were to today's—the necessary conditions of future prosperity. While America went into deficit to give tax cuts to the affluent and to win the Cold War, its trading partners were going into deficit to make these kinds of domestic investments. Yet, through NATO and through the Far Eastern forward deployment, America continues to pay for the defense of these trading partners, against a threat that, at least in Europe, is all but extinct. There has to be a new reckoning here. We wish Clinton had begun it—we wish he had shown the historical imagination to grasp the possibility of this hour.

That possibility is to begin at once a return to the template of prosperity that America abandoned in 1917 in order to save Europe from the Kaiser, humanity from Hitler, and the free world from Stalin. Until then the United States was, in Jane Jacobs's distinction, a trading nation; since then it has been a raiding nation—dispatching fleets and garrisoning soldiers around the world. Raiding has generated its own prosperity, but it is a hectic and unstable one, founded on a mutable threat. Historians may look back on the Reagan years as America's hour of triumph against that threat. Or they may look back on those years as the time when the United States became the world's leading raiding nation—ironically, just when what Paul Kennedy called (in these pages) "the metric of power" was changing in international relations, shifting from military might to economic power, from raiding nations like the United States to trading nations like Japan. As long as Americans continued to tolerate huge budget deficits, it was at least logically possible to imagine that we could combine guns and butter, NATO and domestic investment, raiding and trading. All that was needed was the right set of budgetary priorities. But a balanced budget that allows for an \$80 billion annual subvention to NATO, the capacity to fight two full-scale wars simultaneously, and a strategic nuclear force freezes this country into the outmoded posture of a raiding nation as the metric of power shifts inexorably.

"To govern is to choose," President John F. Kennedy said. We wish President Clinton had made different choices. This is a rare plastic moment in history, if only this country's leaders would realize it. ☼



## “Ulysses” in Chinese

*The story of an elderly  
pair of translators and their unusual  
best seller*

**X**IAO Qian, a Chinese war correspondent and a literature student, stood over the grave of James Joyce in 1946 in Zurich and mourned. “Here lies the corpse of someone who wasted his great talents writing something very unreadable.” Forty-nine years later Xiao still thinks that Joyce carried his virtuosity too far. He has earned the right to his reservations: he and his

**by Cait Murphy**

wife, Wen Jieruo, have just finished a labor that might have humbled Hercules—translating *Ulysses* into Chinese. “In old age one should do something monumental,” says Xiao, who is eighty-five. “This translation is quite monumental.”

As the name implies (“Ulysses” is a Romanization of “Odysseus”), *Ulysses* is organized around the Greek myth known as the *Odyssey*. Homer’s saga tells the

story of Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, who sails with his army to sack the city of Troy. Odysseus has some difficulty getting back home. Only after ten years, and a goodly number of Boy’s Own adventures, is he restored to his faithful wife, Penelope, and his stalwart son, Telemachus.

Joyce masticates Homer’s *Odyssey* and spits it out in his saga of a day (June 16, 1904) in the life of two Dubliners, Leopold Bloom (*Ulysses*) and Stephen Dedalus (*Telemachus*). Penelope is represented by Bloom’s not-so-faithful wife, Molly. *Ulysses* does not slavishly follow the *Odyssey*, though each episode in the ancient tale has a counterpart in the modern one. For example, in one Homeric episode Odysseus descends to Hades, the world of the dead; in Joyce’s version Leopold Bloom—a Jew and therefore, like Odysseus, an outsider—goes to a funeral. If Homer marks the beginning of Western literature, Joyce suggested, *Ulysses* was its culmination. “The task I set myself technically in writing a book from eighteen different points of view and in as many styles,” he wrote to his benefactress, Harriet Shaw Weaver, “all apparently unknown or undiscovered by my fellow tradesmen, that and the nature of the legend chosen would be enough to upset anyone’s mental balance.”

Xiao and Wen don’t need to read Joyce’s paean to his own genius to appreciate the mental upsets that *Ulysses* can produce. “There are places,” Xiao says, “where I think he made it unnecessarily difficult.” His fellow translators can only agree. *Ulysses* has been translated into more than twenty languages, including Icelandic, Arabic, Malayalam, and, fittingly, Irish. Perhaps the surprising thing is not that it has now been translated into Chinese but that the translation is only now available.

Much of the delay can be attributed to the antipathy of the Chinese Communists toward bourgeois liberal Western culture. Joyce’s work became caught in the Chinese government’s straitened view of literature’s role—that it should extol the morally upright deeds of workers, peasants, and soldiers. *Ulysses*—bawdy, irreverent, and anti-heroic—hardly suits. Nor did the Maoist cultural commissars ap-

precipitate the literary merits of *Ulysses*, considering it too pessimistic, subjective, and personal. And perhaps worst of all, it was not concerned nearly enough with the great theme of class struggle. Even with the end, in 1976, of the Cultural Revolution, in which China tried to purge all foreign influences (except Marxism) from the land, Xiao and Wen were confined to translating only what was deemed to be safe material, such as the work of Henry Fielding, Charles Lamb, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

So when the two were just about ready to publish their translation, Xiao took the precaution of writing a series of articles for the Chinese press describing the American trial in 1933 that established that *Ulysses* was not a dirty book. China would look backward, he argued, if it were to ban or censor the book six decades later. Xiao also pointed out the book's "progressive" stance: it was anti-anti-Semitic and anti-imperialistic.

The strategy worked. Published last year, with no interference, the first edition of the three-volume translation sold out its 85,000 copies; a second and a third edition were rushed into print. "We publishers had to be brave to take this kind of risk," says Li Jingdun, the editor of Yilin Publishing House, in Nanjing. "I never imagined this book would be so welcomed by the Chinese reader." Considering the price—about \$15, or roughly a week's wages for a high school teacher in China—the sales are phenomenal, and the couple have become modest celebrities. They keep clippings about their work in two thick albums in their book-cluttered four-room apartment near Tiananmen Square, and clearly enjoy the fuss. Wen positively purrs as she recalls a book-signing in Shanghai that attracted a thousand readers. "Five police officers had to come to keep order," she says. "Very excellent." The story made the front pages of Shanghai's newspapers.

Xiao and Wen both have traumatic personal memories of times when China was not nearly so accommodating, and see their translation as a major advance for China's cultural life. "I feel that this translation of *Ulysses* signifies that China at last has opened herself not only in technology and science but also in literature," Xiao says.

**T**RANSLATING Joyce is no party game in any language, of course. Even a simple sentence like "And going forth, he met Butterly" presents dangers. In fact in the book Buck Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus meet no one named Butterly. Mulligan, Stephen's roommate, is just tossing off a clever remark as he and Stephen leave their residence south of Dublin. He is referring, crudely, as is his wont, to the biblical description of Peter after his betrayal of Jesus: "and going forth, he wept bitterly." In English the allusion is obvious enough. In German, though, after much cogitation, the thought has been put this way: they went forth "*und weinte Buttermilch*"—or "and wept

**“于是他走出去，遇见了巴特里”**

"went out and met Ba Teli"

buttermilk." In Chinese it is translated for sound: they "went out and met Ba Teli," meaning "to hope earnestly-special-inside," but in context signaling a group of foreign sounds. Well, okay: the reader is clued in that the phrase is more than it seems. But a lot is lost in translation.

Another example: Stephen recalls that he has borrowed a pound from the poet and writer George Russell, who styles himself "A.E." Thinking of his debt, Stephen puns "A.E.I.O.U." In the German, Italian, Czech, and Latvian translations, the expression is simply left as it is, which must be rather baffling to readers. Most others include a native-language gloss. In the 1929 French translation the passage reads "A.E. *Je vous dois*. I.O.U." In Spanish it is "A.E. *Te debo*. I.O.U." In Hungarian the vowels are changed, killing the joke: "A.E.K.P." The same is true in Croatian, where an explanation is also added: "A.E.J.V.D (*Ja vam dugujem*). "You can only do your best," says Fritz Senn, of the Zürich James Joyce Foundation. Senn is an authority on Joyce translation. "But of course, if a joke is explained, it is no longer funny." Right. Is there any way to translate Stephen's witicism about Shakespeare's wife: "If others have their will, Ann hath a way?"

Many languages at least share the Roman alphabet, and therefore, to varying degrees, a common corpus of sounds. The name Leopold Bloom looks and sounds much the same from Dublin to Detroit, from Harare to Hanoi.

Enter China and the rules change. To begin with, there are only 404 possible phonetic combinations in Mandarin, far fewer than in English. Wordplay is inevitably distorted. And Chinese is ideographic, not alphabetic; "home," for example, is represented by a stylized picture that has traditionally been interpreted to be a pig beneath a roof. *Ulysses* is not pictorial but aural, and comes alive most vividly when read aloud.

To make things more difficult, Chinese is a tonal language. In Mandarin, the official national tongue, there are four possible tones to each sound: high level, rising, falling rising, and falling. The tones make a difference. For a crude example of the sounds, consider using the word "Ma" in these different contexts: "Oh, Ma!" in surprised anger at seeing your mother where she shouldn't be, "Oh, Ma!" in exasperation, "Ma" in sober conversation, and "Oh, it's Maaa" in warning at an unexpected phone call from the matriarch. In Chinese, tones change the meaning of a word, not just the emphasis. The four tones for "ma" mean, respectively, "mother," "hemp," "horse," and "to curse." (A fifth tone for "ma," which is actually atonal, turns a sentence into a question.)

Proper names are not always translated syllable for syllable. If "America" were to be written sound for sound—that is, one Chinese character for each syllable—it could be construed as "inferior beautiful beneficial addition." That's not a bad metaphor for Chinese ambivalence toward our country, but the standard term for America is actually *mei guo*, which sounds like "America" said with a mouthful of marbles. At least the name translates well: "Beautiful Country." Sometimes names are assigned with reference not to sound at all but to the way China understands the world. This magazine, for example, named after a great body of water, is translated as "*The Great Western Ocean Monthly*."

And finally, normal Chinese discourse is sometimes best translated loosely. When Americans see each other on the street, they ask, "How are you?" But when two Chinese acquaintances meet, they greet each other this way: "*Chi le ma?*"—literally, "Have you eaten yet?" That does not call for a recitation of the day's diet any more than "How are you?" is an invitation to describe one's fitness





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program. Therefore, in translating Chinese into English, "*Chi le ma?*" becomes "How are you?"

So it's no wonder that Xiao was not altogether thrilled when a Chinese publisher suggested in 1990 that he undertake a translation of *Ulysses*. Pity the poor soul who has to deal with a fairly typical scrap of *Ulysses* like this one:

Unsheathe your dagger definitions.  
Horseness is the whatness of allhorse.  
Streams of tendency and eons they worship.  
God: noise in the street: very peripatetic.  
Space: what you damn well have to see.  
Through spaces smaller than red globules of man's blood they creepy-crawl after Blake's buttocks into eternity of which this vegetable world is but a shadow.  
Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past.

I asked Judy Arase, a translator, to find this passage in the Chinese translation and then, without reference to *Ulysses*, translate it from the Chinese back into English. Here's the result:

How about laying bare your dagger-like definitions? That which is the nature of a horse is the essence of all horses. They revere the up-down flow and surging-beginning. God: cries in the street. Downright leisure school of thought. Space: the thing you are bound to see. They slowly crawl towards eternity, boring through spaces smaller than man's red blood cells, chasing after Blake's buttocks. This vegetable world is only but its shadow. Hold tightly to the here and now; all of the future shall surge into the past through it.

The translation is inventive and carries something of the texture of Joyce's prose. Still, it's not quite the same: for one thing, it's far too intelligible.

Wen was undaunted by the complexities; indeed, she was positively eager to take a crack at Joyce. Then sixty-two, and recently retired from a career as a translator of Japanese and the editor of other people's English translations, she felt it was time to put her skills to the test. "In Chinese there is an expression, 'Only the head, not the tail'—meaning that a work has been started but not completed. "For forty years I only polished the translations of others. I never had a chance to translate a famous book, a classic. Why

not *Ulysses*?" Eventually she persuaded her husband that they could crack it together. The project has been an act of teamwork from the beginning, with Wen doing the first draft, Xiao applying the polish, and the two of them arguing over the final version.

Beginning in October of 1990 they set the following schedule: Rise at 5:00 each morning (Wen often had to rouse her less committed husband), work until 8:00, and pause for breakfast. Then work until lunch, and again into the late afternoon. Wen worked nights and weekends as well, putting in, she figures, fifteen hours a day just about every day. She even gave up television and newspapers. For two years her sister took over the household, doing the shopping, cooking, and cleaning, so that the couple could work. The sister died in 1992; the translation is dedicated to her memory.

The couple leaned heavily on published sources to untangle Joycean knots; they cite Don Gifford's annotated *Ulysses* as a particular help. They consulted the Chinese Catholic Church, foreign-language specialists, geologists, doctors, and others for specialized knowledge. The Irish Embassy helped with specifically Irish references. What's "blarney"? Wen asked. The answer, as translated: "flattery as usual." And "on the shaughraun"? A drifting state of mind. The embassy also provided reference books, maps of Dublin, and a videotape of the movie version of *Ulysses*, which was invaluable because Wen and Xiao have never been to Ireland. A Canadian resident in Beijing helped research linguistic oddities like "smutty moll for a mattress jig"—Joycespeak for "prostitute."

Xiao and Wen were also able to refer to a work in progress by a man named Jin Di, a Chinese literary scholar now living in the United States, who began his own Chinese translation of *Ulysses* in 1978 but has not yet seen all of it into print. Bits of Jin's work had been published by the time Xiao and Wen began theirs, and they acknowledge that they saw these, though not the twelve chapters that had appeared in Taiwan by 1993. Jin is somewhat chagrined that he has been working longer and yet is finishing later. But there is room for more than one Chinese translation. The Japanese, after all, are on their fourth. Xiao and

Wen do not claim that their work is flawless; they are, however, delighted to have published first. "A gold medal is better than the silver one," Wen says.

The work is not, in fact, flawless. A sharp-eyed Chinese reader has pointed out a few mistaken translations from the Latin. More important, sometimes things are just missed.

Molly and her lover, Blazes Boylan, eat Plumtree's Potted Meat during their assignation; the term is translated as "plum tree trademark canned meat." Good enough, but it misses the pun: "potted meat" was Dublin argot for sex. When Leopold recalls Molly's description of the plump Ben Dollard, that his fine singing voice was a "bass barreltone," the translation does not embody the play on words. His voice and shape, she is saying, are derived from barrels of Bass beer. Joyce experimented with different ways of expressing cat sounds: "mkgnao," "mrkgnao," "mrkrngao," and, prosaically, "miaow." In Chinese, which does not have the array of sounds English has, the characters don't change.

Still, Xiao and Wen don't miss much. First, they adapted Chinese-language tools to the challenge. Most Chinese names have three syllables (Deng Xiaoping, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai); the Chinese transliterations of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus have seven each. Stephen's is rendered phonetically—"Si di fen · Di da le si." The unusual number of characters, the midline period between them, and the use of a few classical (rather than simplified) Chinese characters are all unmistakable signals

## 斯蒂芬·迪达勒斯

*Sì di fēn · Dī dā lè sī*

to the Chinese reader to ignore the meaning and just note that it signifies a name. (A literal translation would be "This-base of a fruit-fragrant. Enlighten-extend-coerce-this.") The practice is similar to using "#%\*&! " to indicate a curse in English; a reader doesn't delineate each symbol but just consumes the meaning. Bloom, wandering through a newspaper office, reads in type the name of the friend whose funeral he has just attended: mangiD kcirtaP (Patrick Dignam backward). In Chinese the eight characters used to render the name are likewise reversed. When the moral pub owner, Davy Byrne, "smiledyawnednodded all in one," the issue was trickier. Chinese characters

are never smooshed together. Xiao and Wen used a quirk of Chinese grammar that implies simultaneously occurring actions.

They also adapted Chinese styles to Joycean ones. Molly, Leopold, and Stephen all have interior monologues, and all sound different. Molly is not very well educated. She occasionally misuses difficult words, and her thoughts, in the famous soliloquy that ends the book, have an earthy resonance. Stephen, the teacher and literary scholar, is philosophical. And Leopold is a middle-class bloke with a big heart who often thinks about sex and bowel movements. So in the Chinese, Molly is rendered in working-class Beijing slang, Stephen mostly in classical Chinese, and Leopold mostly in a mixture of modern and classical that dates from the early twentieth century. By varying the styles, the translation manages to convey the differences in character among the three.

When there is no linguistic or literary analogue, which is most of the time, footnotes do the job. So much of *Ulysses* is built around puns, allusions, and time- and place-specific Irish humor that it really cannot be translated; one must simply plough through. Wen and Xiao made the most readable Chinese translation they could and then explained the Joycean quirks in footnotes—5,991 of them, the most in any Chinese book ever published. Xiao thought that was several thousand too many, but Wen prevailed. The reviews in the Chinese press pay tribute to the couple's thoroughness, and however unwieldy the footnotes may be to read, they are the only way to clue Chinese readers in to Joyce's intentions.

Take the pun on Shakespeare's wife, Anne Hathaway (whose name Joyce misspells, incidentally). The translation reads "If other women are capable of following their hearts for that which they desire, Ann herself has her own ways." A footnote makes the point that the original is a pun on "Ann Hathaway." Sometimes—a lot of the time—the explanations are considerably more complex. T. Lenehan bumps into Bloom at a newspaper office and announces, "Madam, I'm Adam. And Able was I ere I saw Elba." In the Chinese text this is translated "Madam. I'm Adam. And before seeing Eve, I was Abel." The footnote fills in the considerable gaps:

These two short sentences can be read the same from either end, joined together by "and." "Eva" [Eve] and "Elba" have similar pronunciations. The sound of Adam and Eve's second-born son, "Abel," is similar to "Able"; the quotation can be read as "Madam, I'm Adam. Before seeing Eve, I was Abel." Another reading comes from mixing together the several elements of Napoleon's saying that there is no "cannot" in his dictionary, his post-defeat banishment to the island of Elba, and his impotence; the first phrase can be reconstituted as "Mad am, I mad am," and the latter as "Before seeing Elba, I did not know the word 'cannot.'" "Able" can be understood as "can be done" or "not impotent."

Elementary, really.

**A**NTHONY Burgess, no mean Joyce scholar, has said, "Literature cannot be translated, only the appearance of literature, the arrangement on a page of words which do a minimal job, that of describing action, feelings, and dialogue of a fairly easily translatable kind."

True enough, and yet . . . so what? By the Burgess standard, the English-speaking monoglot would be cut off from Tolstoy, García Márquez, and Lu Xun. And even if the poetry doesn't always rise, action, feelings, and dialogue count too. One of the joys of *Ulysses* is just getting lost in the pub talk and the commonplace to-ings and fro-ings of dear, dirty Dublin. The texture may not—cannot—be exactly the same in Chinese as in English, but it is possible to get a rude, true sense of it.

Joyce himself was a gifted linguist who spent his working life as an instructor of languages. He must have known that if *Ulysses* fulfilled its destiny, it would inevitably find a home beyond English—itsself a foreign import to Ireland. In fact, the first translation of *Ulysses*, a German effort in 1927, came out before the book could be legally published in the United States or Britain. It is difficult to believe that Joyce, hardly parochial in his own work, would frown on the labors of Xiao and Wen. For if *Ulysses* is the end of literature, as Joyce believed, the remaining eternity must include China, the world's longest-lived civilization.

There are limits, though. No one in China is offering to translate *Finnegans Wake*. ☞



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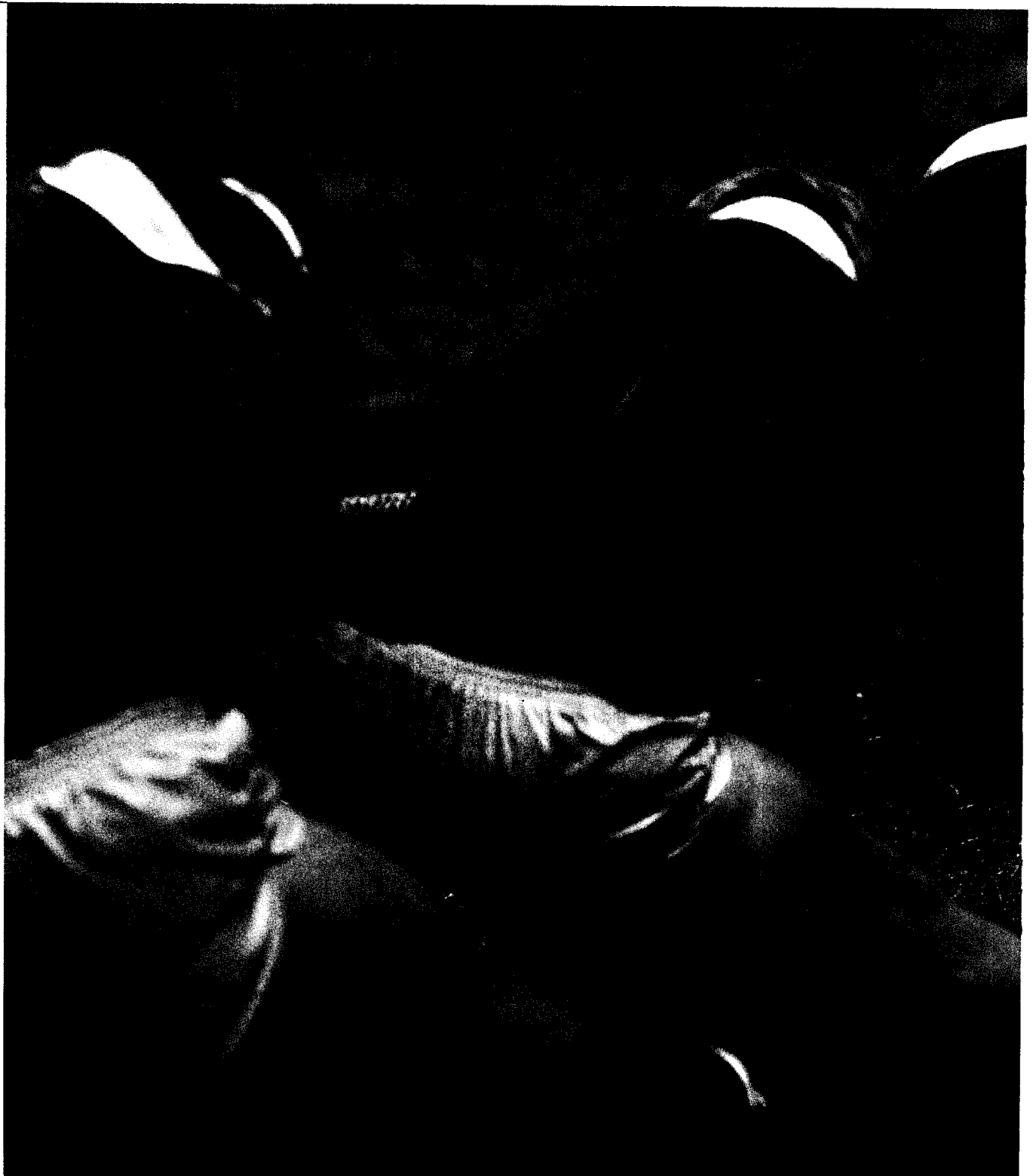
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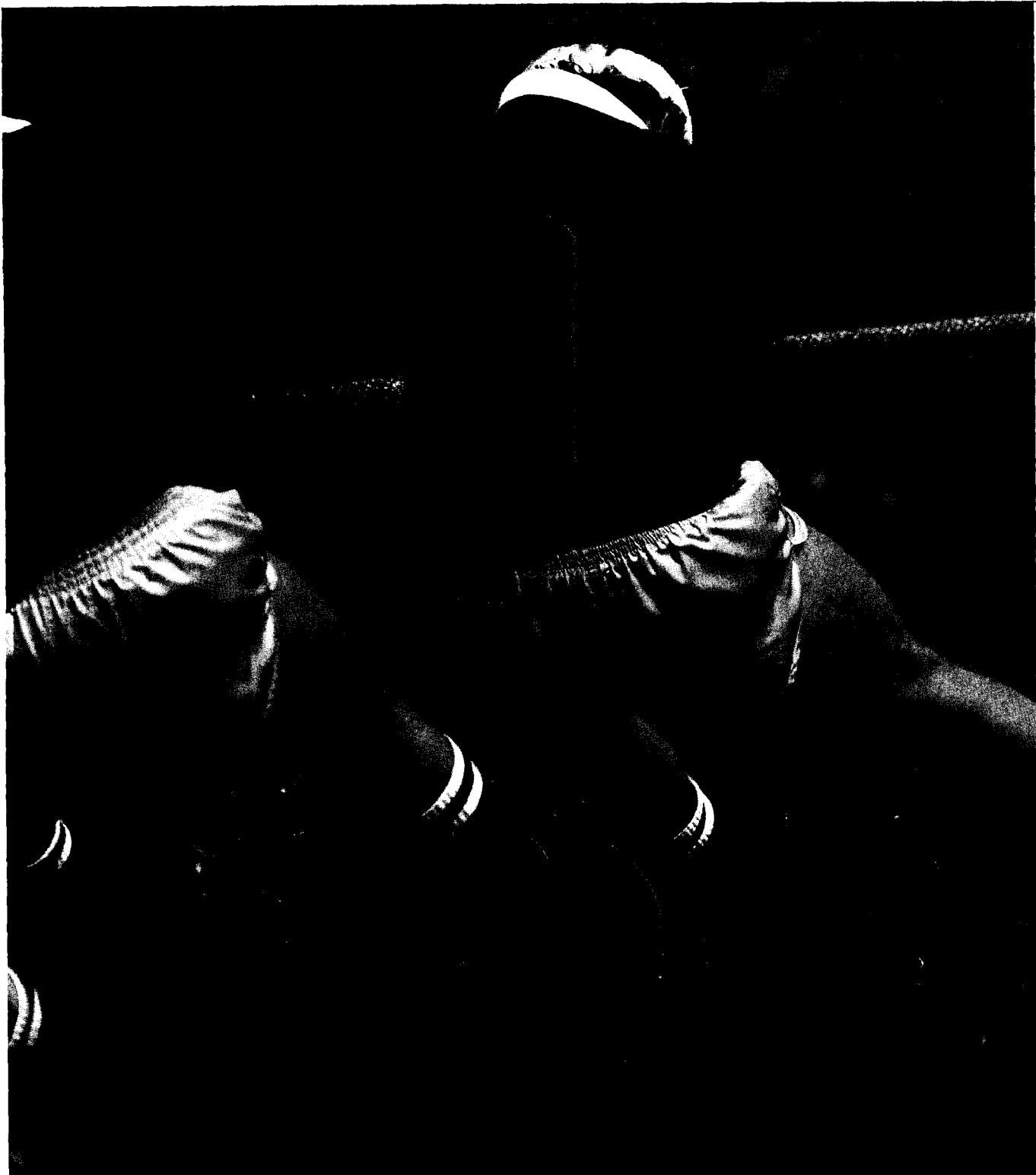
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## The Struggle to Govern Johannesburg

*The transition to nonracial rule is proceeding more slowly—and more viciously—than expected*

**I**T'S a Wednesday morning in the garish assembly hall of Johannesburg's city council, and the bimonthly meeting of the Transitional Metropolitan Council has been going on for hours. The chairman wearily pages through the agenda, droning on about various motions. Hardly anyone is listening. Several council members huddle in an intense private debate; most of the

**by Lynda Schuster**

newspaper reporters have stepped outside to smoke; one participant, head thrown back, seems transfixed by the hideous chandelier hanging above him.

The soporific scene is suddenly interrupted by a squeaky-voiced councilwoman, who takes the microphone to complain that too few of the urban-improvement proposals are addressing the needs of black residents. "This

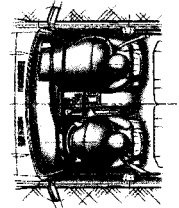
body is doing virtually nothing for the people of the townships," she declares shrilly, wagging a finger at her colleagues. "We're spending all this time considering the suburbs when we should be attending to the thousands of people who have no homes and no basic services. We're supposed to be delivering to them."

One year after the moving spectacle that was South Africa's first democratic election, the country is still battling to undo apartheid. The task is not an easy one, especially here in Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city. To legislate away white-minority rule at the national level—as happened, in essence, in the 1994 elections—was one thing; to abolish apartheid locally, where it has assumed some of its most odious forms, is quite another. What is to be done with Johannesburg's thirteen racially designated local authorities, which employ some 30,000 people? How is a single tax base to be created? Where should the boundary lines for a unified city be drawn? And

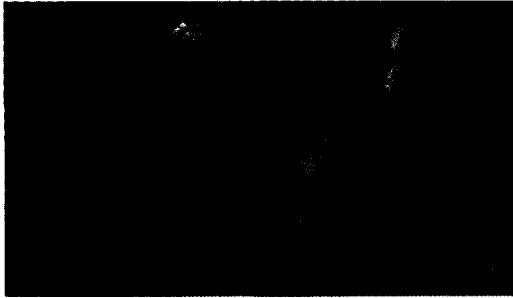
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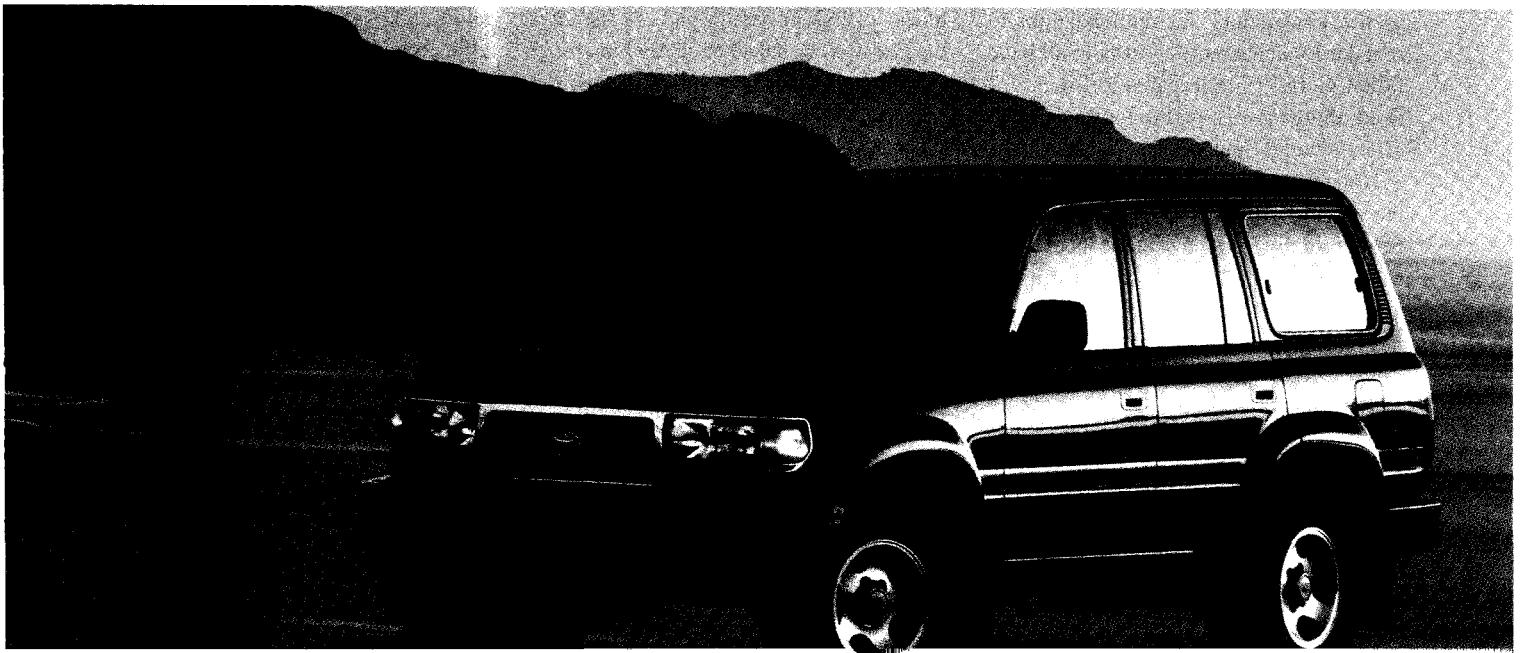
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what about the decades of gross neglect of black communities—an estimated 200,000 people without running water, an equal number without adequate housing?

Nevertheless, among the country's hundreds of racially divided municipalities, Johannesburg was thought to have one of the best shots at consolidating. That's because for four long years—starting well before the transition to black-majority rule—an eclectic array of bureaucrats, consultants, and anti-government activists had been thrashing out the fine points of trash collection and toilet installation in a post-apartheid South Africa. (The process was described by one participant as “part group-therapy session, part crash course in municipal administration.”) By the time the new government ordered the cities to merge their various councils, Johannesburg seemed set to become one of the nation's first racially unified urban areas.

It didn't happen. Instead the city became the arena for a vicious power struggle within the now ruling African National Congress party—a struggle fueled in large part, critics contend, by the inexperienced, third-rate politicians representing the ANC at the local level. The problem is one that plagues the entire country, because most of the ANC's seasoned leaders have gone to work in the upper echelons of government. But the ANC's deficiencies at the local level are perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the tortuous gestation of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, or TMC. Starry-eyed plans, detailed diagrams, consultants' recommendations to remake Johannesburg—virtually all have fallen victim to political skirmishes. Indeed, things got so bad not long ago that arbiters had to intervene.

None of this, obviously, bodes well for the country's future. Government affects people's daily lives most at the local level: that is where the promises to redress apartheid's injustices must be kept, where the real changes in South Africa will be felt, where democracy will either succeed or stumble. “If this city can't be made to work as one,” Mark Swilling, a political scientist at Johannesburg's University of the Witwatersrand, told me recently, “then what happens at the top, what happens nationally, will be mostly irrelevant.”

To be sure, even the harshest critics concede that Johannesburg, as the coun-

try's biggest and most complicated metropolis, was bound to have the biggest and most complicated issues to resolve. Several of South Africa's other major cities are also having difficulty doing away with apartheid, although not all for the same reasons. Smaller municipalities, beset by simpler problems, have been able to move ahead faster with unification.

**N**OTHING is simple about the mess that is greater Johannesburg, the product of numerous statutes over the past century to prevent people of color from living in, or even near, white communities. Among these statutes, the Group Areas Act of 1950, which guaranteed total residential segregation by race, is perhaps the most responsible for having defined Johannesburg's demographic contours. Group Areas provided the legal justification for evicting whole neighborhoods of blacks from the whites-only city. (One such section, known as Sophiatown, was renamed Triomf—“Triumph”—by its white tenants.) And Group Areas was the rationale for dumping the dispossessed in makeshift townships twenty or thirty miles away, desolate places that had little infrastructure or industry and received little financial help from the government. Unlike U.S. cities, which have decayed from the center outward, Johannesburg is ringed by its destitute areas—a condition the South African economist Richard Tomlinson likens to a “too-tight belt around a very fat stomach.” (The demographics changed somewhat in 1988, when Group Areas was amended to allow blacks to live in certain parts of the city; the law was abolished altogether in 1991.)

To understand the implications of the patterns of settlement, it is helpful to view Johannesburg the way Tshepiso Mashinini often does while he reconnoiters the city. Mashinini, an adviser to the TMC, is typical of South African urban activists: young, bright, intense, utterly dedicated. On this day he begins his reconnaissance at the top of Munro Drive, a long, steep road that winds through Upper Houghton, one of Johannesburg's poshest sections. At a lookout point Mashinini gazes down on the affluent northern suburbs, a verdant crazy quilt of sweeping lawns, stately homes, swimming pools, tennis courts, office parks, and shopping malls. But he doesn't see a lush emerald vista; he sees a waste of

space and resources. According to his research, the residential density in these suburbs—fifteen homes to every 2.5 acres, three people to a household—is about half that of Soweto, the sprawling black township to the south. In fact, the facilities are so plentiful in this part of town that Mashinini figures that 500,000 people could move in tomorrow and not even begin to strain the main sewerage line. “This isn't the free market at work,” he says, gesturing at the scene below. “This is apartheid legislation.”

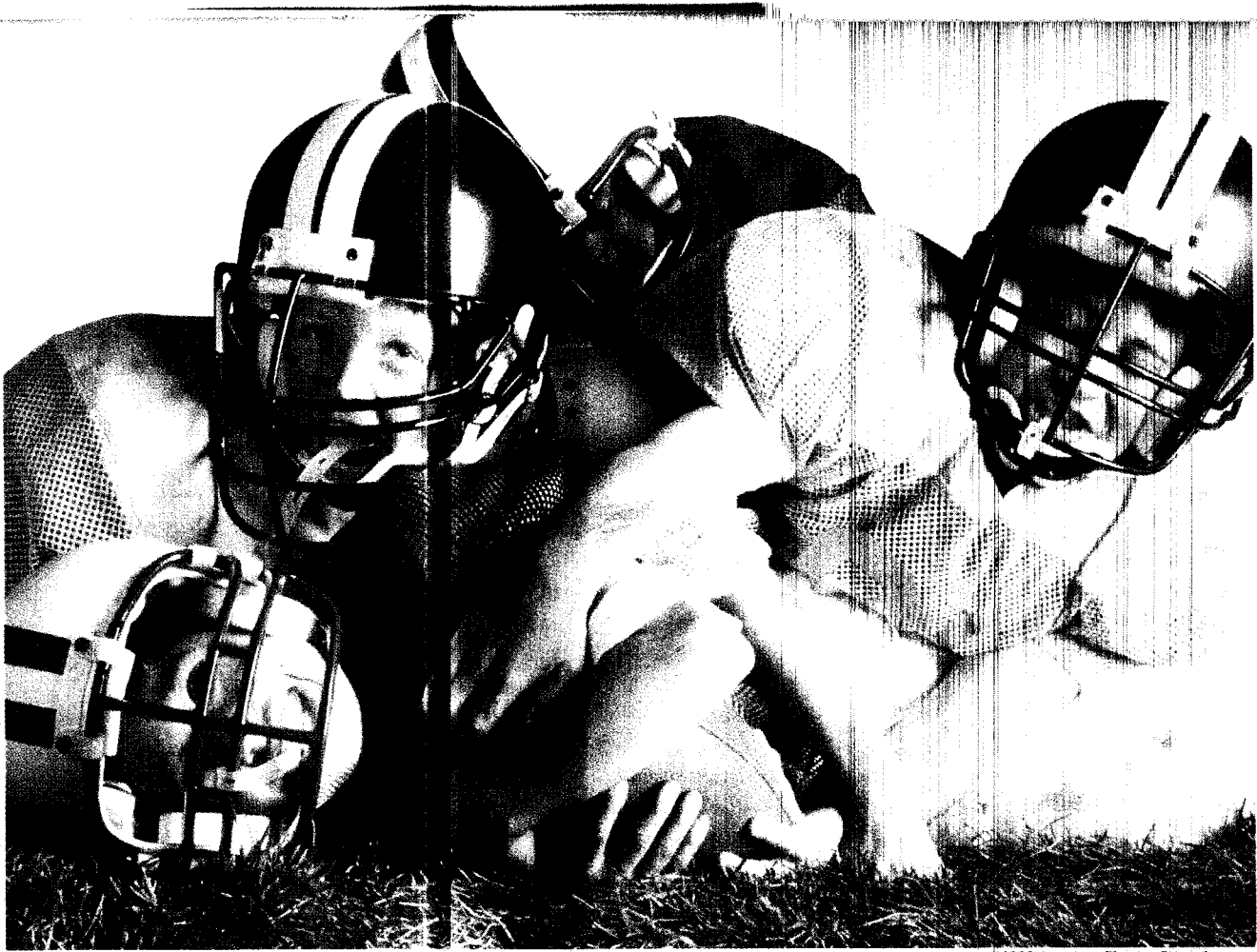
From Munro Drive, Mashinini heads south on the M-1 freeway to Soweto, at the far end of the too-tight belt. Along the way he mutters to himself as he notices nicely manicured soccer fields and parks

*To legislate away  
white-minority rule at  
the national level  
was one thing; to abolish  
apartheid locally,  
where it has assumed  
some of its most odious  
forms, is another.*

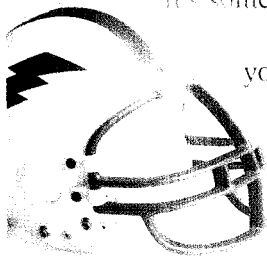
and public swimming pools—all empty, all “underutilized,” in TMC parlance. Mashinini transfers to the M-2 freeway and heads west for several miles on Main Reef Road, the major artery into Soweto. He passes the huge mounds of mining waste that act as a buffer between the township and white areas, and billboards advertising maize meal (the main staple for black South Africans) and a Japanese electronics firm, and suddenly comes upon Soweto. It is as if he has crossed a frontier into another country.

Seen from a distance, Soweto is utterly lacking in green; the tiny “matchbox” houses that march in rigid rows all the way to the horizon are a monochromatic brown. The roads are narrow and rutted; most of the side streets are unpaved. Many are adorned with mountains of decompos-





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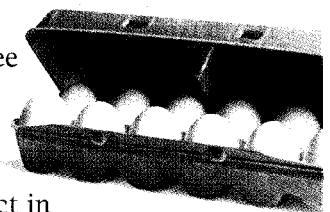
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ing garbage. Squatter camps—pathetic places filled with corrugated-iron shacks and rivers of raw sewage—litter the hill-sides. This township of more than two million people (no one really knows the number), a city a little larger than Houston, has one cinema, one sports stadium, one shopping mall, some fast-food joints, and a handful of grocery and liquor stores. People spend hours every day commuting to Johannesburg, where the jobs are. “There is nothing here because apartheid zoning was a vise-grip this tight,” Mashinini says, making a fist. “It deliberately squashed most opportunities for commercial or industrial development.”

But the three city councils for the area that made up greater Soweto, like all local



authorities in the country, were supposed to be self-sufficient—something of an impossibility, given their tax base of impoverished residents. Consider these statistics: Johannesburg’s old city council had 22,000 workers and an annual budget of close to \$1 billion to serve about 900,000 people; the councils of greater Soweto, with a population more than twice as large, employed only about 3,000 people and had a budget of less than \$100 million. This helps explain why, for instance, Johannesburg hauled away almost 700,000 tons of refuse in 1993, while greater Soweto disposed of only 400,000 tons.

“Soweto is a dump,” Mashinini declares as he steps in front of the house where he spent his childhood, 934 Pitso Street. It is a typical matchbox house: four small rooms inside, pit latrine and cold-water tap outside. Mashinini and his twelve siblings had to sleep squeezed together on the floor in the living room, the kitchen, or wherever they could find space. To bathe, they boiled water on a coal-burning stove. Now Mashinini lives in a proper house in Yeoville, an artsy section of Johannesburg that used to be a Jewish neighborhood. “Growing up in Soweto, you always knew it was a dump,” he continues. “But I never

realized how bad it really was until I moved out. Now I walk down the street to my local bar, a restaurant, the cinema. When the electricity goes out, I call the city council, and they come to fix it immediately. Workmen are always repairing potholes. Here in Soweto they never did anything.”

**T**HE plans to redesign Johannesburg were born precisely of that frustration. Fed up with the township’s miserable conditions and the largely discredited city councils, Soweto’s civic activists in 1986 launched a widespread rent-and-utilities boycott. At first the national government ignored their demands; the mid-1980s were a time of great political upheaval, and the Soweto rent strike was just one of dozens throughout the country. But the boycott dragged on, pulling Soweto’s councils deeper and deeper into debt and forcing the provincial administration to hand over more than \$100 million—money meant for white areas—to keep them afloat. The government clearly had to find a way to end the strike.

The solution materialized in the form of the Soweto People’s Delegation, a group that included Cyril Ramaphosa, then the head of the mine workers’ union. (Ramaphosa is currently the ANC’s secretary-general.) In 1989 the SPD published a paper showing that Soweto’s blacks were, in essence, subsidizing white Johannesburg. The argument went something like this: since Johannesburg got 70 percent of its income from industry and commerce, and since blacks did most of the work, and since Johannesburg didn’t put a penny into the township where its workers lived, wealth, in effect, was moving from Soweto to Johannesburg, which gave its homeowners rebates of up to 55 percent on their property taxes. The paper caused a huge stir; its call for “one city, one tax base” became the rallying cry of township activists throughout South Africa—and the basis upon which the SPD negotiated an end to the rent boycott.

Ramaphosa began talking to officials from the provincial government and Soweto’s councils in October of 1989. After months of fourteen hour-a-day discussions, Ramaphosa—a shrewd and articulate bargainer who would ultimately help to negotiate the transition to majority rule—proposed a settlement: the boycott would be called off if the government

agreed to forgive the millions of dollars owed in arrears to the township councils, to charge a flat fee for utilities, and to work toward the creation of a unified city with a single tax base. The issue of inferior services in the townships, Ramaphosa contended, couldn’t be resolved without addressing the larger problem from which it stemmed: Johannesburg’s artificial division along racial lines.

Thus, while Ramaphosa continued negotiating to end the Soweto boycott (a final accord wouldn’t be ratified for another three years), the multiracial Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber was formed. (“Central Witwatersrand” refers to the greater Johannesburg area.) Completely voluntary, and initially without any statutory powers, it nonetheless had a breathtakingly broad mandate. At least that’s how its members—representatives from civic groups, the provincial government, and the area’s city councils—interpreted matters. They divided themselves into several wide-ranging committees to which they attached ponderous names: the Constitutional Development Working Group, the Physical Development Working Group, the Social Development Working Group, and so on. Each working group had numerous subcommittees, or task teams, all bearing equally ponderous names. Adrian Enthoven, who was the chamber’s operations manager, estimates that about a thousand people—consultants, task-team members, technicians, economists, engineers—had a hand in the negotiations.

The exercise was excruciating, given the enmity and distrust that existed between the opposing sides. White bureaucrats typically saw the civic activists as communist-inspired anarchists, hell-bent on overthrowing the government and installing a Stalinist regime. For their part, the activists considered the bureaucrats to be extensions of the apartheid apparatus: many had been intimately involved in the government’s last-gasp attempt, in the 1980s, to preserve white rule by putting these same activists behind bars, improving the townships a bit, and using the improvement to lure blacks into accepting a limited political dispensation.

But those endless hours of discussion in the chamber seemed to work a kind of transmutation in all the parties. “It was a fascinating thing to observe,” says Fredrik van Zyl Slabbert, who was the cham-



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ber's chairman and is now in charge of planning local-government elections. "The civic associations came into the chamber with foam in the mouth, and the provincial government came in accustomed to saying 'Take it or leave it.' After a while the civics began to appreciate the complexities of administration, and the province began to understand that there was a real crisis of legitimacy in township government."

Patrick Fitzgerald, who chaired one of the chamber committees, likens the experience to the scene in *Annie Hall* in which Woody Allen visits Diane Keaton's genteel family and imagines that every time they look at him, they see a rabbi complete with beard, side curls, and a long black coat. In the case of Fitzgerald, who spent several years in exile as a member of the then-outlawed ANC, the representatives of the provincial government and the white city councils saw Che Guevara. "When they peered over at me, I was sure they saw a beard, red beret, army fatigues, AK-47," recalls Fitzgerald, who sports the smallest of moustaches, has cropped hair, and wears Oxford-cloth shirts. Eventually, he says, they stopped peering.

The working groups concluded that making Johannesburg one city and achieving racial integration would best be done through economic redress. Although many of the black residents with financial means would probably move to white suburbs once apartheid laws were lifted, they represented a minuscule percentage of township dwellers, most of whom were too poor to move. Thus the chamber set as its goal a "compact integrated city"—one that would merge Johannesburg with the townships by building low-income housing on thousands of acres of vacant land close to town and putting to use the excess among existing installations and facilities. By all means improve the townships, the thinking went, but also concentrate on righting the huge imbalances caused by apartheid's draconian zoning laws; "densification" was the key word here—and one that terrified many white residents. For them, it conjured up visions of black squatters crowding into their back yards; an irate suburbanite who attended a presentation put on by the chamber shouted out that it was "Marxist-style engineering."

As for creating a single tax base, the working groups suggested the establishment of the Transitional Metropolitan

Council. They envisioned the TMC as a kind of supra-municipal Big Brother: modeled after Toronto's governing body, it would have power over seven newly delineated local authorities, collecting taxes from them and from the downtown business district and redirecting the money where necessary—thus, in essence, creating a single tax base. If funds were required, say, to build a road in Soweto, the TMC could draw on revenues from the rich northern suburbs. The principle applied to redistributing other resources as well: the TMC would have the power to order suburban sanitation workers and their garbage trucks into Soweto to help clean up the township—thereby integrating the racially segregated municipal work forces.

Some chamber participants wax rhapsodic about the negotiating exercise. "Decolonization on the African continent has been a deal among elites," Mark Swilling, the political-science professor, who also served as a member of the Metropolitan Chamber, contends. "That didn't happen here. This was a complex process of dialogue, a collective learning experience, a massive change in the management process. How else could you begin to break down our racially structured imagination?" (Swilling's former chamber colleague Lawrence Boya asks, more bluntly, "How do you get people who thought of us in the past as monkeys, as baboons, to deliver services to us?") But many saw the Metropolitan Chamber as a group of naive dreamers, dazed by unrealistic expectations and the piles of papers they had produced, and lacking political constituencies that would hold them accountable. Steven Friedman, of the Centre for Policy Studies, an independent research group, speaks of messianic elements in the chamber. "All those grand millenarian visions, that rhetoric about people's empowerment, was nonsense and rubbish," he says. "If you looked at what the new local government was inheriting, there clearly wasn't going to be any magical transformation."

**I**NDEED, when the time came actually to implement the chamber's plans, the consequences of having carried out negotiations in a virtual political vacuum became clear. The ANC finally joined the chamber at the end of 1993, and expectations that Johannesburg would become one of the first consolidated cities quick-

ly evaporated. The ANC delegates demanded that all work be stopped and an audit be conducted; they were intensely suspicious of anything they themselves hadn't developed. They insisted on being allocated two thirds of the seats in a newly constituted TMC, because, they explained, the ANC had polled that percentage in the national election. The fifty-two other organizations in the chamber decried this as demagoguery.

The ANC representatives also rejected the working groups' idea that a single tax base could be created simply by establishing a strong TMC. The minute the TMC tried to tap into revenues, they warned, the white local authorities would challenge its powers in court. Instead the ANC pro-



posed carving up greater Johannesburg into three gigantic local authorities, each one incorporating parts of the poor townships and the rich suburbs. In this way all impoverished areas would be guaranteed a viable tax base without having to rely on the TMC. That assumed, of course, that the local authorities themselves would be viable—something disputed by just about everyone who had participated in the chamber. Critics claimed that the idea was absurd, unwieldy, unworkable; one municipality alone would measure more than forty miles from end to end. But the ANC refused to budge, and the battles dragged on for months before all sides agreed to submit to arbitration.

In the meantime, deadline after deadline passed for getting the new municipalities going. Chamber members who themselves were card-carrying supporters of the ANC found the delays particularly dismaying. After all, they were the ones who had continued the ANC's struggle within the country after the party was banned, in the 1960s, and its leaders forced into exile. As civic activists they had lived dangerous, clandestine lives. Many assumed that when the ANC was made legal and allowed to operate openly in South Africa,

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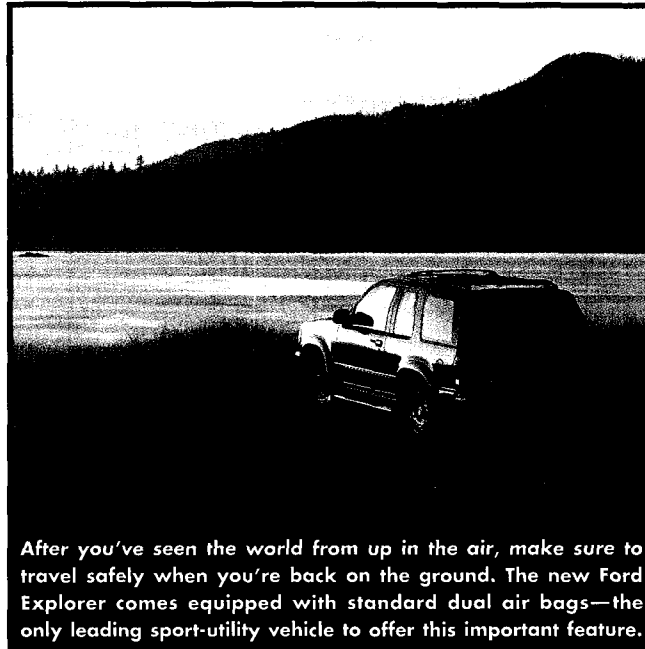
## A Bird's-Eye View of the American Landscape

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### **Magazine Mountain Reunion Fly-In** *September 2-4* *Logan County, Arkansas*

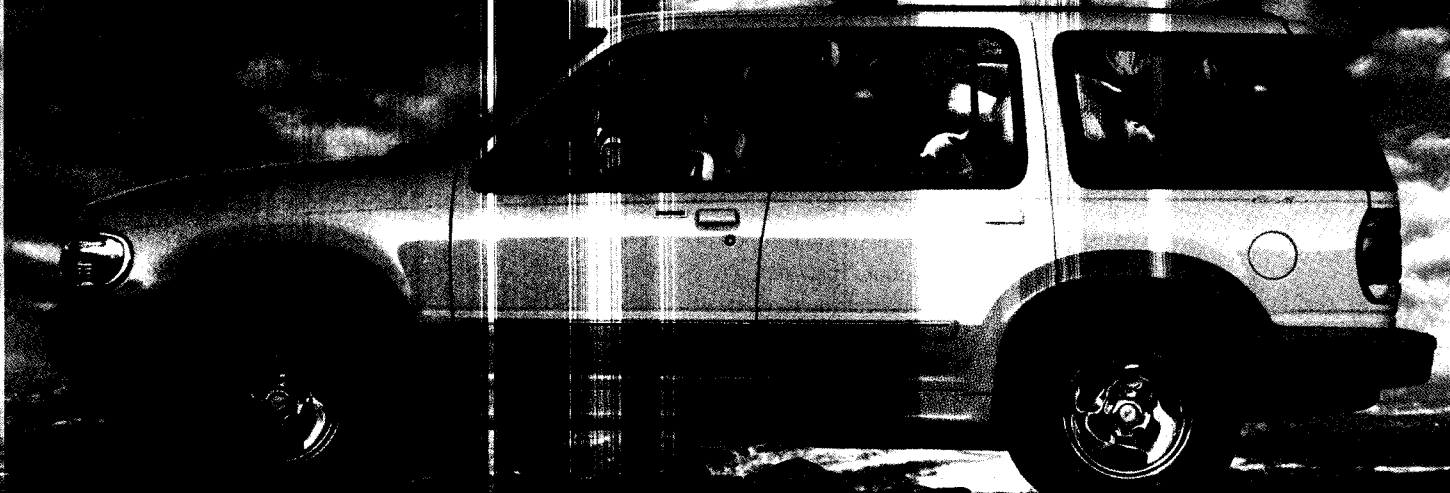
At 2,000 feet above ground level and 2,789 feet above sea level, Magazine Mountain is the highest point between the Alleghenies and the Rockies and has been drawing hang-gliders to the area since the mid-seventies. Still known as one of the premier spots for the sport, the mountain has played host for the past four years to a celebratory fly-in. This year from 65 to 75 pilots are expected to participate. There are no races or competitions at this event—it's strictly for fun and camaraderie. Along with flying from the mountaintop, the weekend's events will include hiking, camping, and barbecues. For information call 501-452-5230.



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as it was in 1990, the party would grant them leadership roles at the local level. Instead the civic activists found themselves being shoved to the sidelines—and by people whom they and others considered to be grossly inept.

"The moral of the story is that the ANC at the local level finds independent grassroots politics very threatening," Steven Friedman says. "If you're a party member, you're not supposed to paddle your own canoe. But at the same time the national ANC doesn't care much about local politics either. So the party replaced those competent elites who had been talking about urban issues for four years with C-grade politicians."

Indeed, the ANC admits its insistence

*Nothing is simple about  
the mess that is  
greater Johannesburg,  
the product of numerous  
statutes to prevent  
people of color from  
living in, or even near,  
white communities.*

on strict loyalty. "Just being a member of the ANC doesn't grant you authority to do as you like," says Collin Matjila, the party's chief city councillor for Johannesburg. "You have to adhere to the ANC position." But Matjila disputes the notion that the party's perhaps-less-than-illustrious representation at the local level implies a lack of interest. "Even those at the provincial and national levels weren't necessarily skilled in governance. Where do [critics] expect our people to have gotten this experience?"

Much of this drama could be dismissed as petty politics but for the effect it is having on the country's demographic and economic heartland. Johannesburg's TMC has been working since December—but barely. The arbiters ultimately ruled in favor of a strong TMC, which

was to oversee seven subordinate local authorities; the ANC's Matjila vowed to fight the decision. Indeed, the ANC and the province's Demarcation Board have now proposed dividing the area into four local authorities, only to be thwarted by opposition political parties in the TMC. At press time these parties appeared poised to take the Demarcation Board to court, a move that could delay the local elections that were scheduled to be held in November—and thus postpone the installation of a permanent local government.

At the ANC's behest many of the chamber's proposals remain shelved; TMC members seem to spend much of their time discussing the minutes of previous meetings. Meanwhile, a lot of the city's major problems are going unattended. Enticed by an ANC promise to build 150,000 houses in the province within twelve months of the national elections, tens of thousands of homeless people have invaded tracts of vacant land throughout the metropolis. TMC officials and the police are frequently called upon to evict squatters—evictions that often turn angry and violent. In recent years other similarly militant squatters, desperate for shelter, took over whole buildings that were standing empty in downtown Johannesburg.

Remedying these problems requires precisely the skills and knowledge that participants in the Metropolitan Chamber acquired; but most of them, disgusted by the political infighting and the ANC's seeming disregard for their work, haven't joined the TMC. Gone with them are the relationships they forged with the white bureaucrats in the municipal unions—vital players who, quite literally, make the city work (or not, if they are so inclined). Dominique Wooldridge, a researcher at the University of Witwatersrand's business school, contends that there is an urgent need to engage in dialogue with the unions about a whole range of labor-relations issues related to integration. Such a dialogue has begun; if it breaks down, the discontent of these unions could result in strikes that might jeopardize the establishment of new multiracial metropolitan structures—and paralyze greater Johannesburg.

But the bureaucrats don't have to engage in such dramatic gestures to wreak havoc. "If the management changes are unilaterally ordered by the politicians, then I foresee great resistance among my members," warns Theo Crouse, the gen-

eral secretary of the Johannesburg Municipal Employees Association, a union of 7,000 officials. "I'm not talking about burning down buildings but about a more subtle approach to sabotage. Remember, the knowledge and information about running these cities rests with us. So if a clerk in the treasurer's department receives a remittance by mail and decides not to open the envelope, then the city isn't going to have any money deposited into its accounts. And it can't very well operate without money."

Perhaps most disturbing is the effect all this may have on the local elections. Political analysts see the months before the poll as critical. They are a window of opportunity to begin delivering the services denied township residents during the decades of apartheid—a brief moment of grace in which black South Africans might give local government a chance to prove it is something other than neglectful, abusive, and corrupt.

If a lesson can be learned from Johannesburg's experience, perhaps it is the glaringly obvious one that doing away with apartheid won't be easily accomplished. Critics of the Metropolitan Chamber argue that Johannesburg should have restricted itself to narrowly defined goals and not tried to reverse years of injustice all at once. They point to Port Elizabeth, a municipality of about a million people in the Eastern Province, which focused on writing a new constitution for the city and its townships, and on combining their budgets; as a result, a unified Port Elizabeth is up and running successfully. But the larger the metropolis, the more complex the issues—no matter what approach is taken. Indeed, both Cape Town and Durban, the country's other large cities, are having serious problems consolidating. Although the specifics differ, in both cities—as in Johannesburg—too many competing political interests need to be considered, too many egos gratified.

And so, Steven Friedman says, Johannesburg will limp along. "It's not very effective political management, but history works in years and decades, not minutes and months. Still, I see it as a lost opportunity. This country needs to develop functional and vigorous local government if it's going to work—and what happens to Johannesburg will have a major influence on what happens to South Africa as a whole." ♣



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**by Corby Kummer**

among the green, green plains and hills that overlook the Tiber, far below, as it makes its way down to Rome. Rounding

the switchbacks of a

long, ecstatic descent

from the small town of

Castiglione back to Orvieto, passing right through the arch of a medieval watchtower at one turn, I kept identifying perfect,

foursquare houses in attractive states of disrepair. That's the one, I would say to myself. No, that one. I could hardly believe that perhaps the most beautiful landscape I had come upon in Italy was just beside the main north-south highway—Italy's first superhighway, the A1—and less than two hours north of Rome.

I was predisposed to enjoy beauty, having begun the morning in the simple comfort of La Badia, a hotel in a former abbey with much of its twelfth-century exterior and its nineteenth-century restoration intact, dramatically situated a few kilometers from the high bastions of Orvieto. Built on a plateau of volcanic rock, Orvieto is famous for its exceedingly ornate Gothic cathedral, with façade sculptures that helped to define Western images of hell, and mosaics as brightly colored as the Sony sign in Times Square. It should be famous for the ice cream at the Gelateria Pasqualetti, just behind the

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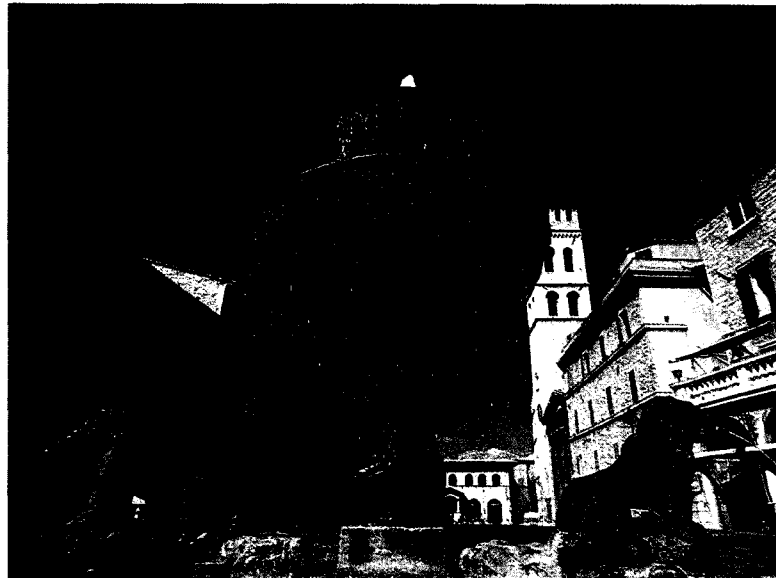
church, made by a master craftsman concerned with using the freshest fruit, which in the fall includes figs, persimmons, and prickly pears, and with obtaining the creamiest and deepest-flavored chocolate and pine-nut gelati. The path from the old town down to the modern one runs along medieval bastions and gray-black walls of volcanic stone so sheer that walking it you can feel, as I had the night before, trapped on the ramparts of the castle of the Wicked Witch of the West. (The crenellated twelve-sided tower of La Badia was my beacon; I encountered no flying monkeys.)

The day was full of chance discoveries. I took my morning cappuccino in Porano, a pleasant village straight uphill from La Badia on the other side of Orvieto, where for a festival that Sunday there happened to be big pictures made of colored sawdust in the streets; around the main church the pavement pictures were made of rose petals. Heading south, I followed rusty yellow signs to several

Etruscan tombs, and to my happy surprise was able to rouse local custodians who let me in. Traces of the Etruscans, enigmatic, artistically innovative pre-Roman people who traded with the Greeks, are abundant north of Rome. Their subtly colored tomb paintings, by turns severe and gay, have mostly been taken to museums—for example, the newly installed National Archaeological Museum, behind the cathedral in Orvieto, which has a superb collection of *bucchero*, or lustrous black Etruscan pottery. The pottery's bulbous and scalloped shapes, thin walls, and incised decoration seem more modern and desirable than anything Greek or Roman. Even if the tomb's original paintings and objects have been removed or stolen, their rectilinear shapes and often extensive layouts are there for the traveler on back roads who keeps an eye out.

What other part of the world offers so many unexpected pleasures—or so many expected ones, if you're always on the alert for exceptional food, as I am? Um-

bria is, after all, the source of some of Italy's best olive oil, every bit the equal of Tuscany's in roundness and peppery bite, and of black truffles. The abundant truffles are less famous than Italy's white ones, but are said to be the equal of France's Perigord black truffles, and are served with a more generous hand. The best Umbrian souvenirs, to my mind (genuine *bucchero* being hard to find and on the expensive side), are little bottles of chopped truffles in oil, which you can get at Carraro, the best salumeria in Orvieto.



A piazza in the ancient pilgrimage town of Assisi

JOHN FERRO SIMS

Antonietta Carraro, the tart-tongued proprietress and chief cook, cheerfully heckles customers in line when they get impatient for her room-temperature rustic pizzas; savory little *panicelli*, rolls studded with local prosciutto and pecorino (sheep's-milk cheese); and *tisichelle*, marvelous biscotti made with wine, olive oil, and anise seeds from a centuries-old recipe thought to be restorative for its lack of eggs and butter.

For years Umbria was an add-on to people's Tuscan itineraries, a place to break up the trip between Rome and Florence or Siena. But Umbria has its own identity: it is more rural than Tuscany, while sharing much of Tuscany's nobility and beauty. Even if today Umbria is siphoning tourists from Tuscany, who think they are discovering the very discovered Spoleto and Gubbio and Todi, large tracts of the region will be virtually empty whenever you visit. The best time is autumn, when the black truffles are chopped into and over many dishes, and

the air is cool but the hills are still green.

Umbria calls itself "the green heart of Italy," perhaps to turn its landlocked status into an asset, perhaps to emphasize the lack of industrialization, which has been a main reason for the ever-increasing sales of land and houses to foreigners who once would probably have bought in Tuscany. Certainly the stunning landscape is enough to make a visitor to Italy set aside at least a few days to see the region.

I keep returning to Umbria to try to understand its soul. It isn't easy. Nancy

Harmon Jenkins, an American writer on food who has long had a house on the border with Tuscany, calls Umbria "veiled." The legacy of Saint Francis, who was born in 1182 in Assisi, the region's principal tourist site, makes the small towns and hills where he preached both alluring and unknowable—like a painting by Piero della Francesca, who in the mid-1400s worked in and around the region. The Umbrian regard for nature helps explain the high numbers of politi-

cal greens, both Italian and foreign, who have settled in the region; its pacific legacy is today more apparent than that of the soldiers who fought bloody battles from Roman times onward. "Umbria spawned a superabundance of saints, warriors and artists—so many that almost any town can claim one or more for its own," Curtis Bill Pepper, an American writer who has lived for years near Todi, has written. "Nowhere in Italy is there such a compost of prayer, violence and art."

**A**LTHOUGH more than two million tourists a year visit Assisi, the town retains its spirituality, which pervades the streets and buildings—many of them housing orders and other religious organizations, and almost all of them built of the region's pinkish stone—without ever seeming either oppressive or exclusive. The Giotto frescoes of the life of Saint Francis, magnificently restored in the Upper Church of the vast Basilica of Saint Francis (a decade before the cleaning of

the Sistine Chapel, their startlingly bright colors caused controversy), are the artistic core of Umbria.

Surprisingly for a town that lives on day traffic, Assisi has several restaurants that serve local dishes at reasonable prices. Ravioli stuffed with wild greens and sheep's-milk ricotta were so good at Ristorante San Francesco, whose terrace overlooks the Upper Church, that I sneaked into the kitchen to see where they came from. The hillsides around Assisi, the owners informed me; a *contadino*, or farm worker, had brought a basket of spiky raponzoli that morning. In keeping with Umbria's sobriquet, its greens seem at once sweeter and more pungent than any in the surrounding regions. La Stalla, at the end of the town, shows the Umbrian mastery of the grill, serving rustic food such as torta al formaggio (bread with melted local cheese) at modest prices.

My two favorite Umbrian towns, Bevagna and Montefalco, lie a short drive from Assisi. Bevagna, on the plains, reflects Umbria's wealth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when many of its great churches were built. (During the Renaissance, Umbria was papal property, and its riches went elsewhere.) Two big and handsome Romanesque churches stand right across from each other in the main square. In the basement of the town hall, which sits between them and dates from 1270, is a curious turn-of-the-century theater, visible through the newly restored arched windows. When I visited in late spring, the town was busily preparing for some sort of festival—one clearly more for its own residents than for tourists, who were nevertheless welcome.

Every region seems to have a town that people claim is its "balcony" or "railing," and Montefalco is Umbria's: it sits on a high hill with views all around. Montefalco has a marvelous museum, in a former Franciscan church made into a gallery in 1895 and recently brightened and reopened. The masterpiece in a noteworthy medieval and Renaissance collection is the fresco cycle of the life of Saint Francis by Benozzo Gozzoli, painted about 150 years after Giotto's and showing many of the same scenes. If Giotto expresses all of Saint Francis's passion and renunciation of worldly pleasures, Gozzoli, a Florentine who worked for the Medici in Florence, is true to Saint Francis's mercantile origins: the colors and

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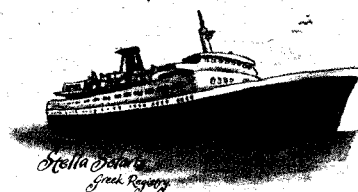
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fabrics (Francis's father sold textiles) are sumptuous, the air cosmopolitan. Yet Gozzoli was surely moved, too, by his subject, and comparing the two cycles makes a very pleasant day's labor.

**A** GOOD base for excursions to all these towns is Le Tre Vasselle, a hotel and restaurant in Torgiano, a town put on the map by Giorgio Lungarotti, whose wines have in thirty years come to be among the most respected in Italy. Torgiano is a half hour by car from Perugia and most of the well-known hill towns. The inn, in a seventeenth-century building, is comfortable and luxurious but not ostentatious; the smallish rooms are decorated with rustic furniture and local textiles, examples of which are for sale at a handicrafts shop also owned by the Lungarottis. (Giorgio's two daughters have joined him in the business.) The family has already opened, adjacent to the hotel, the best-mounted, most informative wine museum in Italy, which is worth visiting even if

you don't stay at the inn. The inn's good food is naturally built around an all-Lungarotti wine list.

Perugia has in the nearly twenty years since I first saw it gone from being a provincial capital enlivened by foreign students to being a sprawling city practically engulfed by small industry. The students still come: they study at the University for Foreigners, which was begun in 1921 to encourage foreign exchange. There's an important state university for Italians, too, and at night the main square, with its famous medieval fountain, is jammed with youth. Jazz lovers come for the long-established summer jazz festival, one of Europe's best known. The city merits at least half a day—a morning, to be sure of finding open the National Gallery of Umbria, just restored and rehung, with its magnificent Piero della Francesca polyptych, also just restored.

Entering the city by car requires navigating a maze of mini-cloverleafs; you have to park outside the walls and take

escalators to the center. This entrance turns out to be delightful, because of the Piranesi-like spaces you travel through in the sixteenth-century walls of the Rocca Paolina. A papal fortress that once dominated the city, the Rocca Paolina was mostly torn down by resentful citizens in the 1860s, at the time of Italy's unification; the walls have become a kind of urban museum with piped-in music. You can have a thick hot chocolate and sacher or linzer torte at the Pasticceria Sandri, which has long been owned by a Swiss



**Orvieto, strikingly sited on a plateau of volcanic rock**

family and has a Viennese Art Nouveau interior that's still intact. For decades Perugia meant Perugina chocolates to Italians, and in particular Baci ("Kisses")—chocolate-hazelnut balls ("decidedly nipple-like," Faith Heller Willinger calls them in *Eating in Italy*) wrapped in star-patterned foil with little romantic verses inside.

A Torgiano base also gives you access to Spoleto, which is best visited when the famous summer arts festival hasn't overtaken it, and to Gubbio, another medieval hill town. Tourists have taken note of Gubbio's excellent state of preservation, and they seem to be the only people there. I would rather drive along the northern edge of Lake Trasimeno, just west of Perugia, to the olive-oil press of Alfredo Mancianti, who produces some of the most prized oil in Italy; in the same building is a charming shop where you'll often encounter his proud father, Faliero, who bought the press in 1952. The trip will also show you the lake, and it's hard to

go wrong at any of the restaurants in the resort towns around it, which generally serve local fish such as perch and carp. Another well-regarded oil producer is Maria Possenti-Castelli, near Terni, who produces a powerfully truffle-flavored oil. Both sell their oils in elegant bottles worth carrying home.

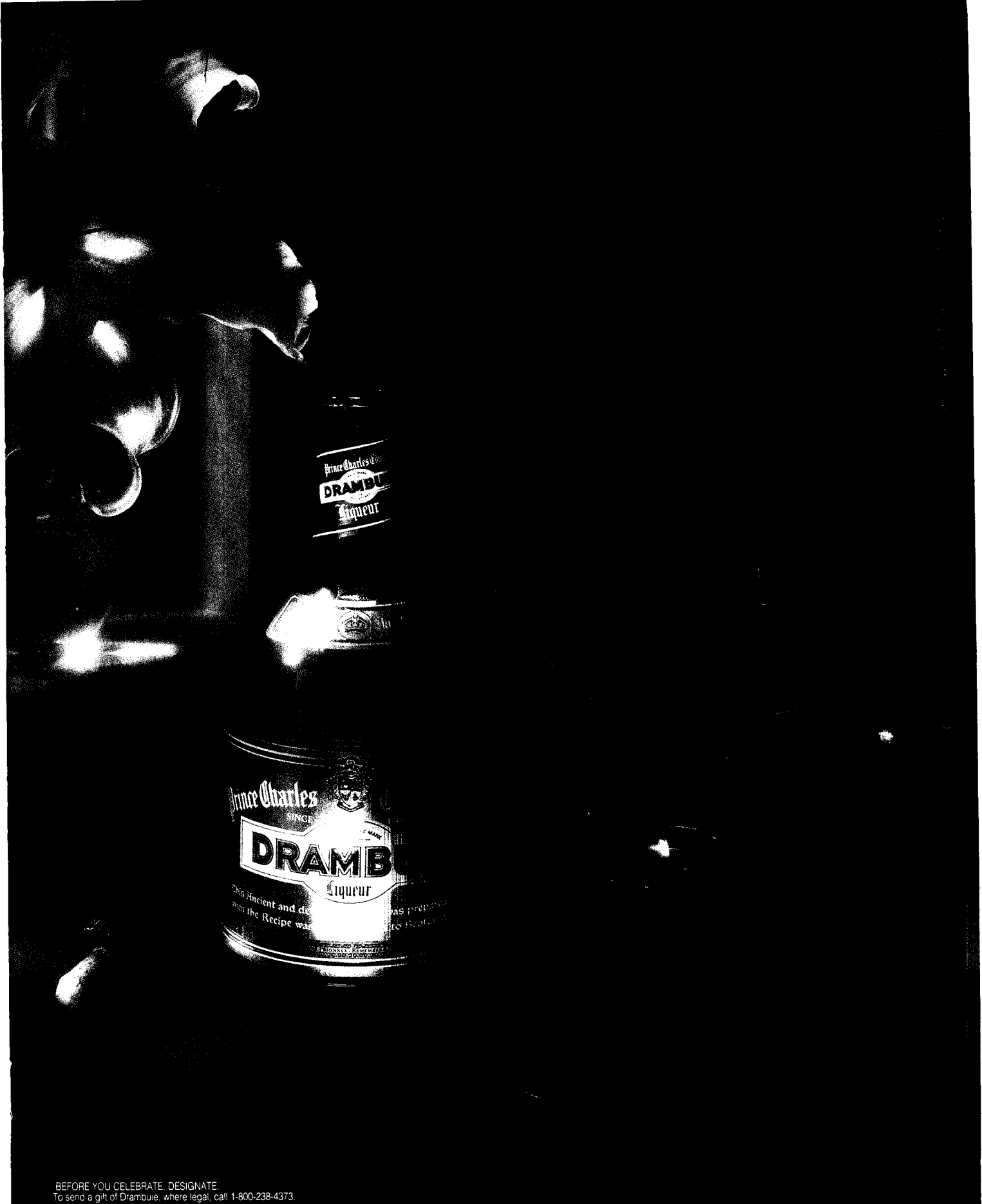
The food of Umbria is simpler than that of any of the surrounding regions. There are only a few ingredients in a typical dish, such as the great spaghetti alla Norcina, with its sauce of black truffles, garlic, and anchovies.

The dish is named for Norcia, a town on the other side of Spoleto that is worth visiting for the picture it gives of untouristed everyday life. What's more, in *Italy for the Gourmet Traveler*, which will be published next March, Fred Plotkin singles out Norcia as the best food town in Umbria. It's worth driving there, he says, to try the lentils—Italy's most famous—from the nearby town of Castelluccio (which doesn't have Norcia's abundance of

good places to eat), and the various sausages and hams. "*Norcineria*" is a generic word that butchers all over Italy use for their line of pig products, and the butcher is a "*norcino*." Plotkin points out the restaurants Trattoria dal Francese and Granaro del Monte.

The reason to go to Umbria—more than food, more than charming hill towns, more, perhaps, than frescoes—is that mystic landscape. The back road from Todi to Orvieto, up hills and across valleys, past a medieval castle in the middle of the tiny town of Prodo, overlooking Lake Corbara far below, is another route like the one that induced my bicycling ecstasy. The twenty-four-mile passage, which for the last third is dominated by the almost hallucinatory image of Orvieto rising on its volcanic base, has inspired many of the foreigners who have the means to indulge real-estate lust to find their ideal life there, at least seasonally. The rest of us can drive up from Rome for a few days, and keep dreaming. ☼

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# ON ABORTION: A LINCOLNIAN POSITION

by GEORGE McKENNA

*Principled yet pragmatic, Lincoln's stand on  
slavery offers a basis for a new politics of civility that is  
at once anti-abortion and pro-choice*

T

WENTY-TWO years ago abortion was made an individual right by the Supreme Court. Today it is a public institution—one of the most carefully cultivated institutions in America.

It is protected by courts, subsidized by legislatures, performed in government-run hospitals and clinics, and promoted as a “fundamental right” by our State Department. As Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor observed in the 1992 *Casey* decision, which reaffirmed *Roe v. Wade*, a whole generation has grown up since 1973 in the expectation that legal abortion will be available for them if they want it.

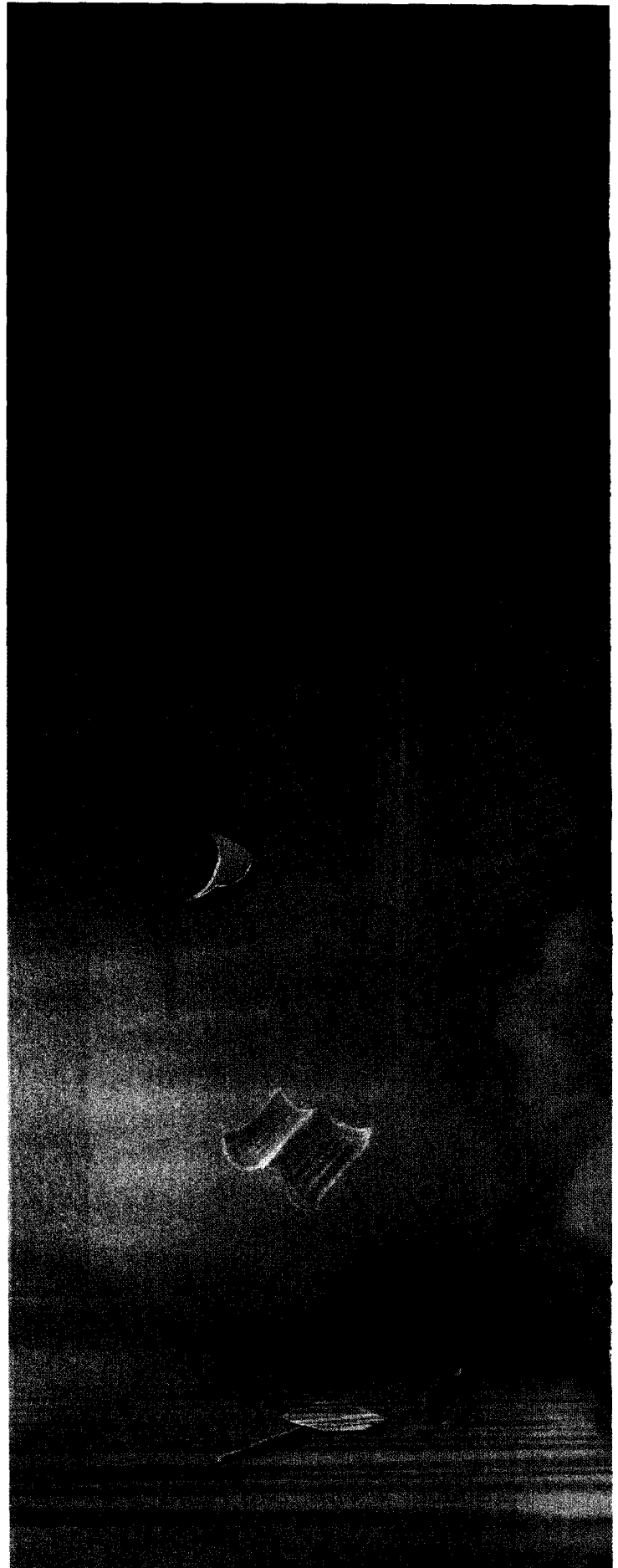
Today our nation's most prestigious civic groups, from the League of Women Voters to the American Civil Liberties Union, are committed to its protection and subsidization. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education now requires that abortion techniques be taught in all obstetrics-and-gynecology residency training programs. Influential voices in politics and the media are now demanding the assignment of U.S. marshals to protect abortion clinics against violence, and a federal law passed last year prescribes harsh criminal penalties for even nonviolent acts of civil disobedience if they are committed by demonstrators at abortion clinics. Some private organizations that administer birth-control programs and provide abortions, notably Planned Parenthood, are closely tied to government bureaucracies: Planned Parenthood receives one third of its income from the federal government. Abortion today is as American as free speech, freedom of religion, or any other practice protected by our courts.

With this difference: unlike other American rights, abortion cannot be discussed in plain English. Its warmest supporters do not like to call it by its name.

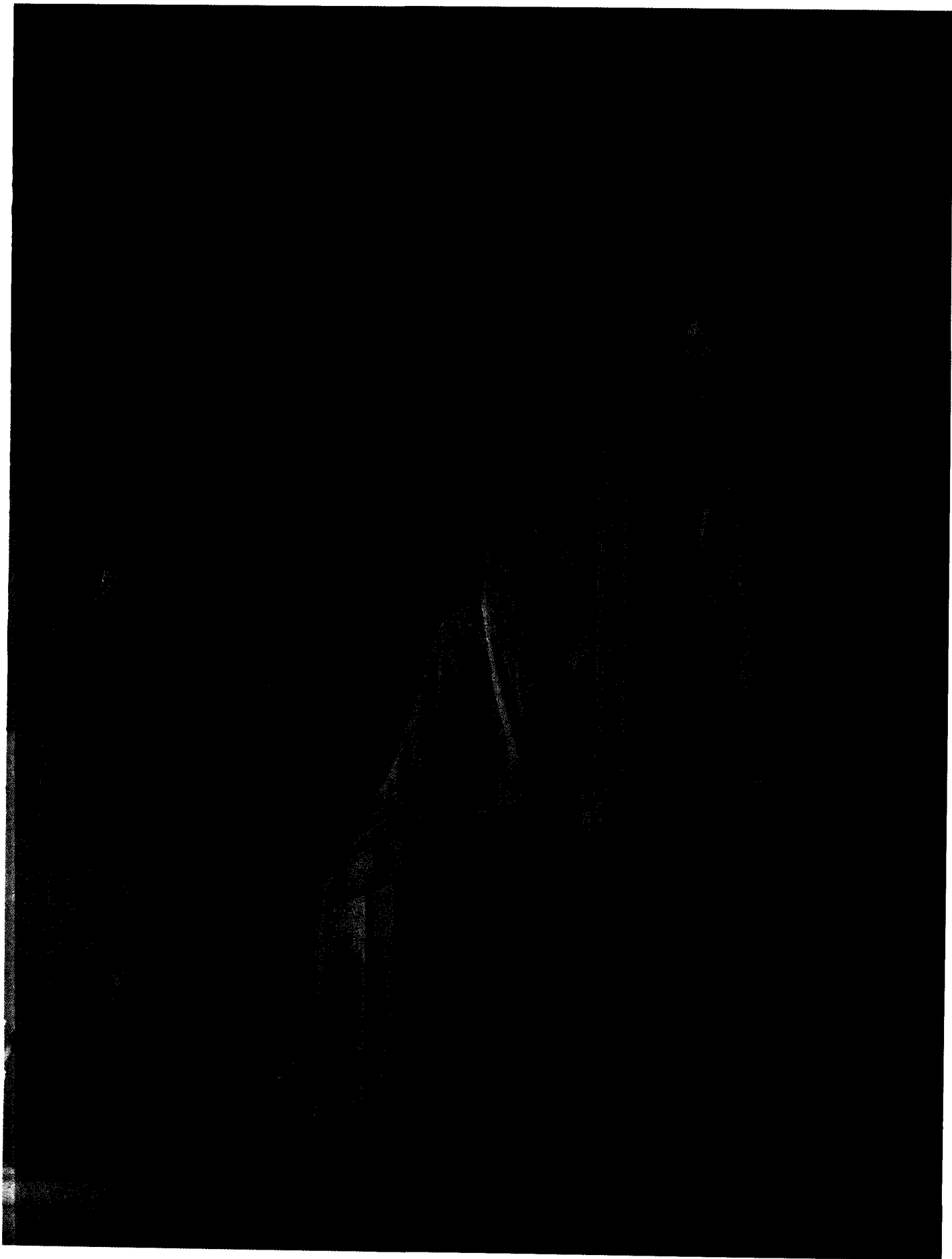
Abortion is a "reproductive health procedure" or a "termination of pregnancy." Abortion clinics are "reproductive health clinics" (more recently, "women's clinics"), and the right to obtain an abortion is "reproductive freedom." Sometimes the word "abortion" is unavoidable, as in media accounts of the abortion controversy, but then it is almost invariably preceded by a line of nicer-sounding words: "the right of a women to choose" abortion. This is still not enough to satisfy some in the abortion movement. In an op-ed piece that appeared in the *The New York Times* shortly after a gunman killed some employees and wounded others at two Brookline, Massachusetts, abortion clinics, a counselor at one of the clinics complained that the media kept referring to her workplace as an abortion clinic. "I hate that term," she declared. At the end of the piece she suggested that her abortion clinic ought to be called "a place of healing and care."

The Clinton Administration, the first Administration clearly committed to abortion, seems to be trying hard to promote it without mentioning it. President Bill Clinton's 1993 health-care bill would have nationalized the funding of abortion, forcing everyone to buy a "standard package" that included it. Yet nowhere in the bill's 1,342 pages was the word "abortion" ever used. In various interviews both Clintons acknowledged that it was their intention to include abortion under the category of "services for pregnant women." Another initiative in which the Clinton Administration participated, the draft report for last year's United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, used similar language. Abortion, called "pregnancy termination," was subsumed under the general category of "reproductive health care," a term used frequently in the report.

Why, in a decade when public discourse about sex has become determinedly forthright, is "abortion" so hard to say?







No one hesitates to say “abortion” in other contexts—in referring, for example, to aborting a plane’s takeoff. Why not say “abortion of a fetus”? Why substitute a spongy expression like “termination of pregnancy”? And why do abortion clinics get called “reproductive health clinics” when their manifest purpose is to *stop* reproduction? Why all this strange language? What is going on here?

The answer, it seems to me, is unavoidable. Even defenders and promoters of abortion sense that there is something not quite right about the procedure. “I abhor abortions,” Henry Foster, President Clinton’s unconfirmed nominee for Surgeon General, has said. Clinton himself, who made no secret of his support for abortion during his 1992 campaign, still repeats the mantra of “safe, legal, and rare” abortion. Why “rare”? If abortion is a constitutional right, on a par with freedom of speech and freedom of religion, why does it have to be “rare”? The reason Clinton uses this language should be obvious. He knows he is talking to a national electorate that is deeply troubled about abortion. Shortly before last year’s congressional elections his wife went even further in appealing to this audience by characterizing abortion as “wrong” (though she added, “I don’t think it should be criminalized”).

Sometimes even abortion lobbyists show a degree of uneasiness about what it is they are lobbying for. At the end of 1993 Kate Michelman, the head of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, was interviewed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* about NARAL’s new emphasis on the prevention of teen pregnancies. The reporter quoted Michelman as saying, “We think abortion is a bad thing.” Michelman complained that she had been misquoted, whereupon she was reminded that the interview had been taped. Nevertheless, NARAL issued a statement a few days later declaring that Michelman “has never said—and would never say—that ‘abortion is a bad thing.’” Michelman, who had reason to know better, sought only to “clarify” her remark in a letter to the *Inquirer*. “It is not abortion itself that is a bad thing,” she wrote. “Rather, our nation’s high rate of abortion represents a failure” of our system of sex education, contraception, and health care. But a month later Michelman herself, testifying before a House subcommittee on energy and commerce, insisted that “the reporter absolutely quoted me incorrectly,” and she later told a *Washington Post* reporter, “I would never, never, never, never, never mean to say such a thing.” Not until the *Post* reporter showed her the transcript did Michelman finally acknowledge—somewhat evasively—that she had said it: “I’m obviously guilty of saying something that led her to put that comment in there.”

Whatever else Michelman’s bobbing and weaving reveals, it shows how nervous abortion advocates can get when the discussion approaches the question of what abortion *is*. Even if we accept Michelman’s amended version of her remark, which is that it is not abortion but the “high rate” of abortion that is a bad thing, the meaning is hardly changed. If one

abortion is not a bad thing, why are many abortions bad? What is it about abortion that is so troubling?

The obvious answer is that abortion is troubling because it is a killing process. Abortion clinics may indeed be places of “healing and care,” as the Planned Parenthood counselor maintains, but their primary purpose is to kill human fetuses. Whether those fetuses are truly “persons” will continue to be debated by modern scholastics, but people keep blurring out fragments of what was long a moral consensus in this country. Once in a while even a newscaster, carefully schooled in *Sprachregelungen*, will slip up by reporting the murder of “a woman and her unborn baby,” thus implying that something more than a single homicide has taken place. But that “something” must not be probed or examined; the newscaster must not speak its name. Abortion has thus come to occupy an absurd, surrealistic place in the national dialogue: It cannot be ignored and it cannot be openly stated. It is the corpse at the dinner party.

## DOUGLAS AND THE DEMOCRATS

ONLY one other institution in this country has been treated so evasively, and that is the institution that was nurtured and protected by the government during the first eighty-seven years of our nation’s existence: the institution of slavery.

The men who drafted the Constitution included representatives from slave states who were determined to protect their states’ interests. Yet they were all highly vocal proponents of human liberty. How does one reconcile liberty with slavery? They did it by producing a document that referred to slavery in three different places without once mentioning it. Slaves were “persons”—or, sometimes, “other persons”—in contrast to “free persons.” The slave trade (which the Constitution prohibited Congress from banning until 1808) was referred to as “the Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit.” Free states were required to return fugitive slaves to their masters in the slave states, but in that clause a slave was a “person held to Service or Labour” and a master was “the party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.”

At least the founders recognized the humanity of slaves by calling them “persons”; but in the next generation the status of slaves, and of blacks in general, steadily declined. By the end of the 1820s slaves were reduced to a species of property to be bought and sold like other property. Thomas Jefferson, who in 1776 had tried to insert into the Declaration of Independence a denunciation of the King for keeping open “a market where MEN should be bought & sold,” now agonized only in private. Publicly all he could say on the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration (the last year of his life) was that the progress of enlightenment had vindicated the “palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor



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a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God,” adding vaguely, “these are grounds of hope for others.”

Jefferson often shied away from public controversy, but even the most flamboyant political leaders of the early nineteenth century could become suddenly circumspect when the talk turned to slavery. Andrew Jackson left office in 1837 blaming the South’s secession threats on those northerners who insisted on talking about “the most delicate and exciting topics, topics upon which it is impossible that a large portion of the Union can ever speak without strong emotion.” Such talk, he said, assaulted “the feelings and rights” of southerners and “their institutions.” Jackson, usually a plainspoken man, would not mar the occasion of his last presidential address by saying the words “abolitionist” and “slavery.” When slavery was discussed during the antebellum period, it was usually in the language of “rights”—the property rights of slaveholders and the sovereign rights of states. In 1850 the famous Whig senator Daniel Webster defended his sup-

port for a tough fugitive-slave law on such grounds. What right, he asked, did his fellow northerners have “to endeavor to get round this Constitution, or to embarrass the free exercise of the rights secured by the Constitution to the persons whose slaves escape from them? None at all, none at all.”

Webster supported the Compromise of 1850, which attempted to settle the question of slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico by admitting California as a free state and Utah and New Mexico “with or without slavery as their constitution may provide at the time of their admission.” This last principle was seized upon by Stephen A. Douglas, the “little giant” of the Democratic Party, and made the basis of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which Douglas pushed through Congress in 1854. Nullifying the Missouri Compromise of 1820, it opened the remaining territories to slavery if the people in them voted for it. Douglas’s rationale was “popular sovereignty,” a logical extension of states’ rights. The premise of states’ rights was that any institution a state wanted to have, it should have, so long as that didn’t conflict with the Constitu-

## THE LATHER

*“20 Mule Team Boraxo . . . Cleans Dirty Hands”*

On the tin stowed under the upstairs sink  
The mule team circulates in silhouette:  
Yeoman hand-scrub of workingmen and sons  
Going back to before his father was born.

And so he pictures vast bleached dunes  
Shimmering to the vanishing point,  
The chalky powder heaped in mounds  
And hauled to the city by wagon train

To meet demand, a grand procession.  
So let tar bleed from telephone poles,  
Let engine blocks ooze rainbow slicks  
And bike chains jam with caked-up gunk—

He’s heard his father say one scoop will cut  
Through any crap, no matter what,  
Just work the lather good, keep at it.  
He’s fallen into rhythm now, a little remote,

A little dreamy: the team marches round  
The tin like ants, his wrists turn and turn  
In a reaming motion, and his head spins  
To think of all the pitch-black hands

Squelching away at this dinner hour,  
Filling washbasins with oily rivers.  
And now his suds froth even darker.  
His skin’s on fire. He feels certain

The storied mines can’t last forever:  
The dunes will dwindle into moon dust,  
The mules will litter the desert floor  
With hollow skulls. He knows in his bones

He’s turning into the kind of upstart  
Who never misses a chance to flout  
A father’s orders about what not to touch  
Or take apart. In the fogging mirror

He sees himself far older, doubled over  
Fiendish smears that won’t rinse out  
(Some industrial taint? Indelible ink?)  
Faithfully, furiously, though he scours.

—DAVID BARBER

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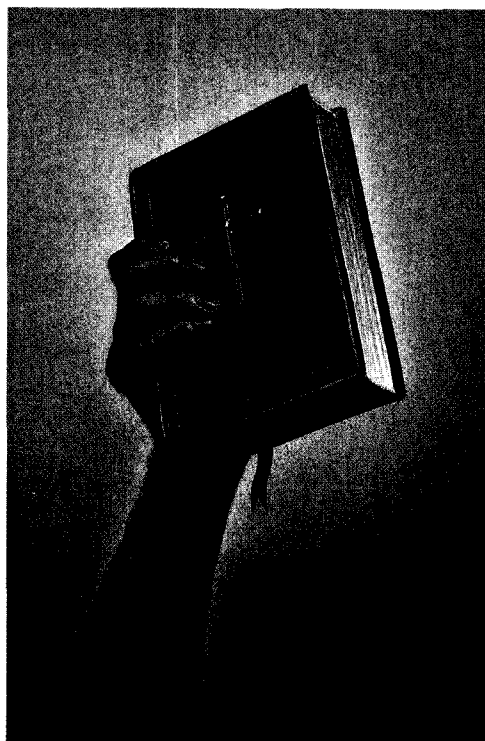
*Cigarette by FTC method*

tion. Since slavery not only did not conflict with the Constitution but was protected by it, Douglas said, it followed that each state had “a right to do as it pleases on the subject of slavery,” and the same principle should apply to the territories. Douglas’s appeal was not to the fiery pro-slavery minorities in the South, who insisted that slavery was morally right, but to the vast majority in the North, who simply felt uncomfortable talking about the subject. He assured them that they didn’t have to—that they could avoid the subject altogether by leaving it to the democratic process. Let the people decide: if they “want slavery, they shall have it; if they prohibit slavery, it shall be prohibited.” But what about the rights of slaves? That, Douglas said, was one of those issues that should be left to moralists and theologians. It did not belong in the political or legal realm. In speaking of the right to own slaves, he said,

I am now speaking of rights under the Constitution, and not of moral or religious rights. I do not discuss the morals of the people of Missouri, but let them settle that matter for themselves. I hold that the people of the slaveholding States are civilized men as well as ourselves, that they bear consciences as well as we, and that they are accountable to God and their posterity and not to us. It is for them to decide therefore the moral and religious right of the slavery question for themselves within their own limits.

Looking back today on Douglas’s words, now 137 years old, one is struck by how sophisticated and “modern” they seem. He ruled out of order any debate on the morality of slavery. That was a “religious” question. It had no place in a constitutional debate, and we had no right to judge other people in such terms. In one of his debates with Lincoln in 1858, Douglas scolded his opponent for telling the people in the slave states that their institution violated the law of God. “Better for him,” he said, to cheers and applause, “to adopt the doctrine of ‘judge not lest ye be judged.’”

The same notions and even some of the same language have found their way into the abortion debate. In *Roe v. Wade*, in 1973, Justice Harry Blackmun observed that philosophers and theologians have been arguing about abortion for centuries without reaching any firm conclusions about its morality. All “seemingly absolute convictions” about it are primarily the products of subjective factors such as one’s philosophy, religious training, and “attitudes toward life and family and their values.” As justices, he said, he and his col-



leagues were required to put aside all such subjective considerations and “resolve the issue by constitutional measurement free of emotion and of predilection.” As the abortion debate intensified, particularly after Catholic bishops and Christian evangelicals entered the fray in the 1970s, the word “religious” was increasingly used by abortion defenders to characterize their opponents. They used it in exactly the same sense that Douglas used it in the slavery debate, as a synonym for “subjective,” “personal,” and thus, finally, “arbitrary.” In this view, religion is largely a matter of taste, and to impose one’s taste upon another is not only repressive but also irrational. This seems to be the view of the philosopher Ronald Dworkin in his book *Life’s Dominion* (1993) and

in some of his subsequent writings. What the opposition to abortion boils down to, Dworkin says, is an attempt “to impose a controversial view on an essentially religious issue on people who reject it.”

The approach has served as useful cover for Democratic politicians seeking to reconcile their religious convictions with their party’s platform and ideology. The most highly publicized use of the “religious” model was the famous speech given by Mario Cuomo, then the governor of New York, at the University of Notre Dame during the 1984 presidential campaign. Characterizing himself as an “old-fashioned” Catholic, Cuomo said that he accepted his Church’s position on abortion, just as he accepted its position on birth control and divorce. But, he asked rhetorically, “must I insist you do?” By linking abortion with divorce and birth control, Cuomo put it in the category of Church doctrines that are meant to apply only to Catholics. Everyone agrees that it would be highly presumptuous for a Catholic politician to seek to prevent non-Catholics from practicing birth control or getting a divorce. But the pro-life argument has always been that abortion is different from birth control and divorce, because it involves a nonconsenting party—the unborn child. At one point in his speech Cuomo seemed to acknowledge that distinction. “As Catholics,” he said, “my wife and I were enjoined never to use abortion to destroy the life we created, and we never have,” and he added that “a fetus is different from an appendix or a set of tonsils.” But then, as if suddenly recognizing where this line of reasoning might lead, he said, “But not everyone in our society agrees with me and Matilda.” In other words, it was just a thought—don’t bother with it if you don’t agree. *De gustibus non est disputandum*.



Cuomo's speech received considerable press coverage, because it was perceived as a kind of thumb in the eye of New York's Cardinal John O'Connor, who had been stressing the Church's unequivocal moral condemnation of abortion. The argument, then, was newsworthy but not at all original. New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, another pro-choice Catholic, had been saying much the same thing since the mid-1970s, and by the 1980s it had become the standard argument. One hears today from the Clintons, from spokespeople for the American Civil Liberties Union, and from the philosopher Ronald Dworkin, the journalist Roger Rosenblatt, and the celebrity lawyer Alan Dershowitz, and from legions of others that opposition to abortion is essentially religious, or private, and as such has no place in the political realm. There is a patient philosophical response to this argument, which others have spelled out at some length, but it finds no purchase in a mass media that thrives on sound bites. There is also a primal scream—"Murder!"—that is always welcomed by the media as evidence of pro-life fanaticism. But is there a proper *rhetorical* response, a response suited to civil dialogue that combines reason with anger and urgency? I believe there is, and the model for it is Abraham Lincoln's response to Stephen Douglas.

## LINCOLN AND THE REPUBLICANS

**L**INCOLN had virtually retired from politics by 1854, having failed to obtain a much-coveted position in the Administration of Zachary Taylor. Then came the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Stephen Douglas's masterwork, which permitted the extension of slavery into the territories. Lincoln was horrified. In his view, slavery was like a cancer—or a "wen," as he called it. It could be eliminated only if it was first contained. If it ever metastasized, spreading into the new territories, it could never be stopped. He viewed the Kansas-Nebraska Act as a stimulant to the growth of the cancer because it invited slave-owning "squatters" to settle in the new territories, create electoral majorities, and establish new slave states. One of the longest and most passionate of Lincoln's speeches was his 1854 address on the act, which rehearsed many of the themes that would reappear in his debates with Douglas.

Douglas had boasted that the Kansas-Nebraska Act furthered democracy by leaving the question of whether or not to adopt slavery up to the people in the territories. Lincoln quickly homed in on the critical weakness in this "self-government" argument: "When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs *another* man, that is *more* than self-government—that is despotism." It would not be despotism, of course, if slaves were not human: "That is to say, inasmuch as you do not object to my taking my hog to Nebraska, therefore I must not object to you taking your slave." This,

Lincoln said, "is perfectly logical, if there is no difference between hogs and negroes." Lincoln kept returning to the question of the humanity of slaves, the question that Douglas ruled out of bounds as essentially "religious." Everywhere, Lincoln said, even in the South, people knew that slaves were human beings. If southerners really believed that slaves were not human, why did they join in banning the international slave trade, making it a capital offense? And if dealing in human flesh was no different from dealing in hogs or cattle, why was the slave-dealer regarded with revulsion throughout the South?

You despise him utterly. You do not recognize him as a friend, or even as an honest man. Your children must not play with his; they may rollick freely with the little negroes, but not with the "slave-dealers" children. If you are obliged to deal with him, you try to get through the job without so much as touching him.

People's moral intuitions could not be repressed; they would surface in all kinds of unexpected ways: in wincing and unguarded expressions, in labored euphemisms, in slips of the tongue. Lincoln was on the lookout for these, and he forced his opponents to acknowledge their significance: "Repeal the Missouri Compromise—repeal all compromises—repeal the declaration of independence—repeal all past history, you still can not repeal human nature. It will still be the abundance of man's heart, that slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth will continue to speak."

Douglas tried to evade the force of these observations by insisting that he didn't care *what* was chosen; all he cared about was the freedom to choose. At one point Douglas even tried to put his own theological spin on this, suggesting that God placed good and evil before man in the Garden of Eden in order to give him the right to choose. Lincoln indignantly rejected this interpretation. "God did not place good and evil before man, telling him to make his choice. On the contrary, he did tell him there was one tree, of the fruit of which, he should not eat, upon pain of certain death. I should scarcely wish so strong a prohibition against slavery in Nebraska."

Lincoln's depiction of slavery as a moral cancer became the central theme of his speeches during the rest of the 1850s. It was the warning he meant to convey in his "House Divided" speech, in his seven debates with Douglas in 1858, and in the series of speeches that culminated in the 1860 presidential campaign. In all these he continually reminded his audience that the theme of choice without reference to the *object* of choice was morally empty. He would readily agree that each state ought to choose the kind of laws it wanted when it came to the protection and regulation of its commerce. Indiana might need cranberry laws; Virginia might need oyster laws. But "I ask if there is any parallel between these things and this institution of slavery." Oysters and cranberries were matters of moral indifference; slavery was not.

The real issue in this controversy—the one pressing upon every mind—is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery *as a wrong*, and of another class that *does not* look upon it as a wrong. The sentiment that contemplates the institution of slavery in this country as a wrong is the sentiment of the Republican party.

Lincoln has been portrayed as a moral compromiser, even an opportunist, and in some respects he was. Though he hoped that slavery would eventually be abolished within its existing borders, he had no intention of abolishing it. Although he said, in his “House Divided” speech of 1858, that “this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*,” Lincoln made it clear in that speech, and in subsequent speeches and writings, that his intention was not to abolish slavery but to “arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction. . . .” In his first inaugural address, desperate to keep the South in the Union, he even hinted that he might support a constitutional amendment to protect slavery in the existing slave states against abolition by the federal government—a kind of reverse Thirteenth Amendment. The following year he countermanded an order by one of his own generals that would have emancipated slaves in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In that same year he wrote the much-quoted letter to Horace Greeley stating that his “paramount object” was not to free slaves but to save the Union, and that if he could save the Union without freeing a single slave, he would do it. But when it came down to the commitment he had made in the 1850s, Lincoln was as stern as a New England minister. Slavery, he insisted, was an evil that must not be allowed to expand—and he would not allow it to expand. He struggled with a variety of strategies for realizing that principle, from gradual, compensated emancipation to outright abolition, but he never for a moment swerved from the principle. A month after his election Lincoln replied in this way to a correspondent who urged him to temper his opposition to slavery in the territories: “On the territorial question, I am inflexible. . . . You think slavery is right and ought to be extended; we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted.”

## A LINCOLNIAN POSITION ON ABORTION

**I** SUGGESTED that we can find in Lincoln’s anti-slavery rhetoric a coherent position that could serve as a model for pro-life politicians today. How would this rhetoric sound? Perhaps the best way to answer this is to provide a sample of what might be said by a politician devoted to a cause but no less devoted to building broad support for it. With the reader’s indulgence, then, I will play that politician, making the following campaign statement:

“According to the Supreme Court, the right to choose abortion is legally protected. That does not change the fact that

abortion is morally wrong. It violates the very first of the inalienable rights guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence—the right to life. Even many who would protect and extend the right to choose abortion admit that abortion is wrong, and that killing 1.5 million unborn children a year is, in the understated words of one, ‘a bad thing.’ Yet, illogically, they denounce all attempts to restrain it or even to speak out against it. In this campaign I *will* speak out against it. I will say what is in all our hearts: that abortion is an evil that needs to be restricted and discouraged. If elected, I will not try to abolish an institution that the Supreme Court has ruled to be constitutionally protected, but I will do everything in my power to arrest its further spread and place it where the public can rest in the belief that it is becoming increasingly rare. I take very seriously the imperative, often expressed by abortion supporters, that abortion *should* be rare. Therefore, if I am elected, I will seek to end all public subsidies for abortion, for abortion advocacy, and for experiments on aborted children. I will support all reasonable abortion restrictions that pass muster with the Supreme Court, and I will encourage those who provide alternatives to abortion. Above all, I mean to *treat it as a wrong*. I will use the forum provided by my office to speak out against abortion and related practices, such as euthanasia, that violate or undermine the most fundamental of the rights enshrined in this nation’s founding charter.”

The position on abortion I have sketched—permit, restrict, discourage—is unequivocally pro-life even as it is effectively pro-choice. It does not say “I am personally opposed to abortion”; it says abortion is evil. Yet in its own way it is pro-choice. First, it does not demand an immediate end to abortion. To extend Lincoln’s oncological trope: it concludes that all those who oppose abortion can do right now is to contain the cancer, keep it from metastasizing. It thus acknowledges the present legal status of “choice” even as it urges Americans to choose life. Second, by supporting the quest for alternatives to abortion, it widens the range of choices available to women in crisis pregnancies. Studies of women who have had abortions show that many did not really make an informed “choice” but were confused and ill-informed at the time, and regretful later. If even some of those reports are true, they make a case for re-examining the range of choices actually available to women.

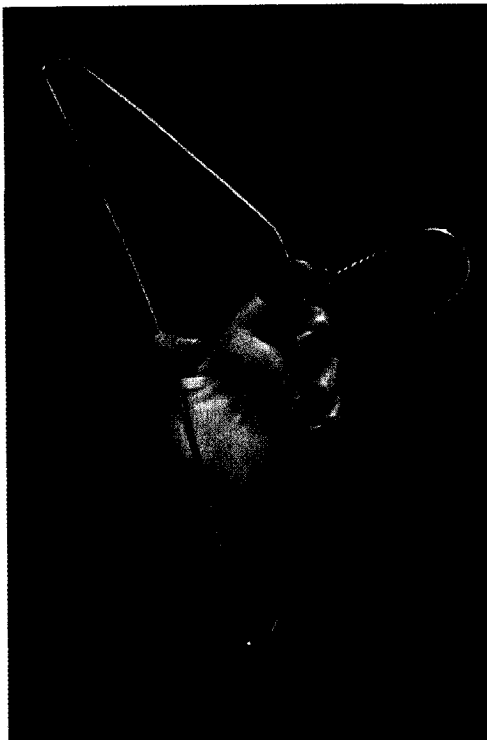
Would a candidate adopting this position be obliged to support only pro-life nominees to the Supreme Court? To answer this, let’s consider Lincoln’s reaction to *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, the 1857 Supreme Court ruling that Congress had no right to outlaw slavery in the territories. Lincoln condemned the decision but did not promise to reverse it by putting differently minded justices on the Court. Instead his approach was to accept the ruling as it affected the immediate parties to the suit but to deny its authority as a binding precedent for policymaking by the other branches of the federal government. If he were in Congress, he said in a speech delivered in July of 1858, shortly before his debates with

Douglas, he would support legislation outlawing slavery in the territories—despite the *Dred Scott* decision. In our analogy we need not follow Lincoln that far to see the valid core of his position. Yes, he was saying, the Supreme Court has the job of deciding cases arising under the Constitution and laws of the United States. But if its decisions are to serve as durable precedents, they must be free of obvious bias, based on accurate information, and consistent with “legal public expectation” and established practice, or at least with long-standing precedent. Since *Dred Scott* failed all these tests, Lincoln believed that it should be reversed, and he intended to do what he could to get it reversed. But he would not try to fill the Court with new, “catechized” justices (a process to which he thought Douglas had been party regarding the Illinois state bench). Instead he would seek to persuade the Court of its error, hoping that it would reverse itself. Lest this seem naive, we must remember that *he intended to conduct his argument before the American people*. Lincoln knew that in the final analysis durable judicial rulings on major issues must be rooted in the soil of American opinion. “Public sentiment,” he said, “is every thing” in this country.

*With it, nothing can fail; against it, nothing can succeed. Whoever moulds public sentiment, goes deeper than he who enacts statutes, or pronounces judicial decisions. He makes possible the enforcement of these, else impossible.*

The lesson for pro-life leaders today is that instead of trying to fill the Supreme Court with “catechized” justices, a strategy almost certain to backfire, they should content themselves with modest, competent justices who are free of ideological bias, and all the while keep their eyes on the real prize: “public sentiment.” *Dred Scott* was overturned within a decade by the Civil War, but *Plessy v. Ferguson*—the 1896 ruling validating state-imposed racial segregation—darkened the nation for fifty-eight years before it was overturned in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Yet during that long night civil-rights advocates were not silent. In thousands of forums, from university classrooms and law-school journals to churches and political conventions, they argued their case against American-style apartheid. In the end they not only won their legal case but also forged a new moral consensus.

It took time—time and patience. The lesson for pro-life advocates is that they need to take the time to lay out their case. They may hope for an immediate end to abortion, and they



certainly have a First Amendment right to ask for it, but their emphasis, I believe, should be on making it clear to others why they have reached the conclusions that they have reached. They need to reason with skeptics and listen more carefully to critics. They need to demand less and explain more. Whatever the outcome, that would surely contribute to the process of reasonable public discourse.

The “campaign statement” I presented above is my own modest contribution to that process. It seeks common ground for a civil debate on abortion. It does not aim at a quick fix; it is based on the Lincolnian premise that nothing is possible without consensus. At the same time, it suggests that some measures can be taken here and now, and with broad public sup-

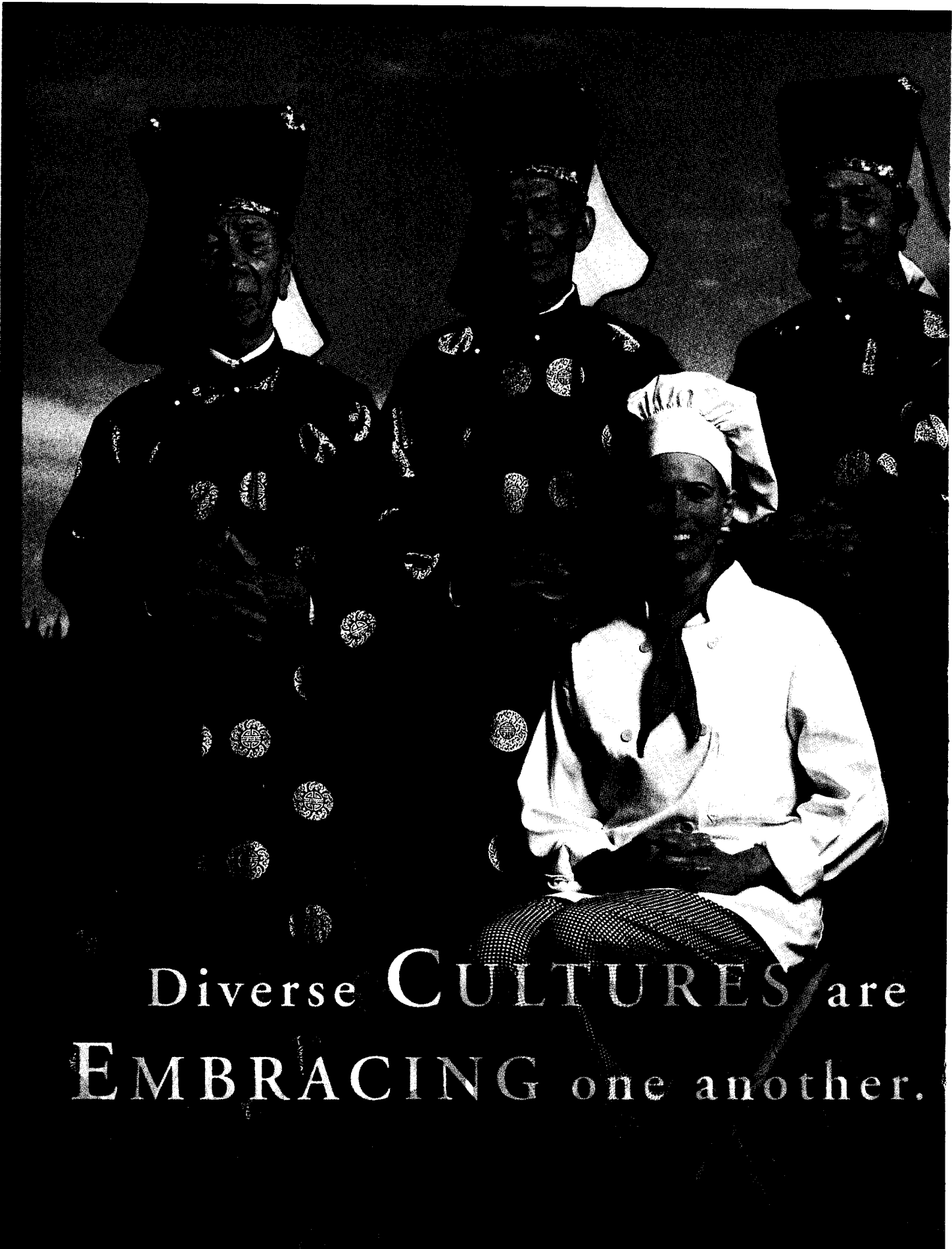
port, to contain the spread of abortion.

Would either party, today, endorse such an approach? Probably not.

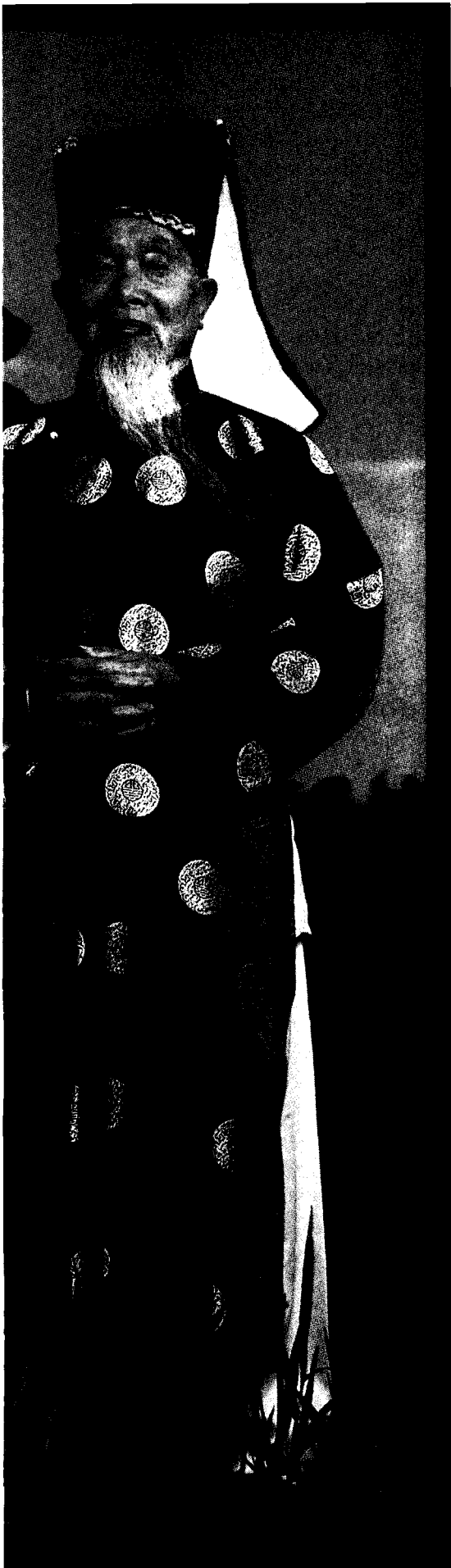
It is easy to see why Democrats would run from it. Since 1972 pro-choice feminists have become increasingly important players in Democratic Party councils. In 1976 abortion lobbies got the Democratic platform committee to insert a plank in the party platform opposing a constitutional amendment banning abortion, and since then they have escalated their demands to include public funding of abortion and special federal protection of abortion clinics. No Democrat with serious national ambitions would ever risk offending them. A long list of Democrats who were once pro-life—Edward Kennedy, Jesse Jackson, even Al Gore and Bill Clinton—turned around in the seventies and eighties as the lobbies tightened their grip on the party. In 1992 Robert Casey, the pro-life governor of Pennsylvania, a liberal on every issue except abortion, was not even permitted to speak at the Democratic National Convention.

What is more puzzling—at first glance, anyway—is the tepid reception the pro-life position has received over the years from centrist Republican leaders. In the present, heated atmosphere of Republican presidential politics, most Republican candidates have been wooing pro-life voters, obviously anticipating their clout in next spring’s primaries. But in the day-to-day management of party affairs few Republican leaders have shown much enthusiasm for the cause. Among the ten items in Newt Gingrich’s Contract With America there is no reference to abortion (in fact, there is no reference to any of the social-cultural issues that the Republicans once showcased, beyond demands for tougher child-





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pornography laws and “strengthening rights of parents”). The Republican national chairman, Haley Barbour, is at odds with pro-life Republicans who accuse him of trying to scuttle the party’s pro-life position. The party’s leading spokespeople include vocal abortion supporters like Christine Todd Whitman, the governor of New Jersey, and William Weld, the governor of Massachusetts, and its most prominent candidates in last year’s elections—Mitt Romney in Massachusetts, Michael Huffington in California, George Pataki in New York—all declared themselves pro-choice.

It would be hard to find any Republican seriously seeking national office today who would say of abortion what Lincoln said of slavery: “The Republican Party think it wrong—we think it is a moral, a social, and a political wrong.” Why? Wasn’t it the Republicans who first promised to support a “human-life amendment” outlawing abortion? Didn’t Ronald Reagan often use his bully pulpit to speak out in behalf of the unborn? Yes—but that was then. In 1980 the Republicans set out to woo those who were later called Reagan Democrats, and one of the means was a pro-life plank, designed to counter the plank the Democrats had put in their platform four years earlier. The wooing worked all too well. Many of the conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants who streamed into the Republican Party in 1980 were ex-New Dealers, and they retained elements of the old faith. They may have cooled toward the welfare state, but they were not opposed to the use of government to promote social goals. Their primary goal, the outlawing of abortion, would itself involve the use of government; but even beyond that, these new “social conservatives” never really shared the Republicans’ distrust of an activist government. Republican leaders thus greeted them warily. These Democrats-turned-Republican were seen to be useful during elections but a nuisance afterward. During the Reagan years they were given considerable verbal support, which at times greatly helped the pro-life cause (as, for example, at the UN International Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984, when Reagan officials helped push through a final report stating that “abortion in no way should be promoted as a method of family planning”), though it never got beyond lip service. During the Bush Administration even lip service faltered as Republican officials decided that their party’s “big tent” needed to accommodate the pro-choice view. “Read my lips,” Bush said, but he was talking about “no new taxes.” Bush’s failure to keep his tax promise was seen as a major cause of his defeat in 1992, but in the ashes of this defeat lay what Republican leaders took to be a new sign of hope: they figured they could win elections on tax-and-spend issues as long as they kept their promises; they didn’t need the “social issues” people anymore.

The Republicans have thus returned to where they feel most comfortable. Back in the 1880s William Graham Sumner used to say that the purpose of government is “to protect the property of men and the honor of women.” Modern Re-

publicans would hasten to add “the property of women” to this meager agenda, but the philosophy is the same. It sees the common good as the sum of individual private satisfactions. Its touchstone is the autonomous individual celebrated by John Locke in *Of Civil Government* (1690): “free, equal, and independent” in the state of nature, the solitary savage enters society only to protect what is his—or hers. Here is a philosophy radically at odds with pro-life premises. If a woman has an absolute, unqualified right to her property, and if her body is part of her property, it follows that she has a right to evict her tenant whenever she wants and for whatever reason she pleases. This “despotic” concept of individual ownership is Republican, not Democratic. If Democrats are pro-choice for political reasons, Republicans are pro-choice in their hearts. Talk radio’s greatest Republican cheerleader, Rush Limbaugh, has also been an outspoken pro-lifer, but even Limbaugh has been softening that part of his message lately—and small wonder. Here is Limbaugh castigating the environmental movement: “You know why these environmentalist wackos want you to give up your car? I’ll tell you the real reason. They don’t want you to have freedom of choice.” There it is. Freedom of choice: the philosophical center of modern-day Republicanism.

Well, the reader asks impatiently, if Democrats are pro-choice politically and Republicans are pro-choice philosophically, what’s the point of that pro-life “campaign statement”? Who is going to adopt it? Perhaps the good folks in some little splinter party, but who else? I answer as follows: American party politics is very tricky, at times seemingly unpredictable. Who, in the early sixties, would have dared to predict that the Democrats would become the abortion party? But there was a subtle logic at work. By 1964 it was clear that the Democrats were about to become the civil-rights party. The feminism of the sixties rode into the reform agenda on the back of civil rights (by the end of the decade “sexism” had entered most dictionaries as a counterpart to “racism”), and high on *its* agenda was not just the legalization but the moral legitimization of abortion. Nevertheless, it took a dozen years for the full shift to occur. I think that within the next dozen years the shift could be reversed. To explain why, I must take a long look backward, to the parties’ respective positions in Lincoln’s time.

## PRO-LIFE DEMOCRATS

**I**N the 1850s it was not the Republicans but the Democrats who were the champions of unbridled individualism. As heirs of Andrew Jackson’s entrepreneurialism—and ultimately of Jefferson’s distrust of “energetic government”—the Democrats were wary not only of national action but also of any concept of the common good that threatened individual or local autonomy. It was the Republicans, heirs of Whig nationalism and New England transcendentalism, who succeeded—under Abraham Lincoln’s tutelage—in constructing a coher-





Next time you sit down to dinner, consider

this tasty tidbit. Two-thirds of all the foods we eat in the world today didn't come from all over the world. They're native to the Native Peoples of North, South and Central America. Now, before you take your first bite, imagine what your meal would be like if Native Americans weren't such consummate cultivators.



For starters, you'd be eating spaghetti without tomato sauce. Pancakes minus maple syrup. And burgers, hold the fries. Boston would be baked beanless. Ditto the clam chowder. The South would lose its grits, cornbread,



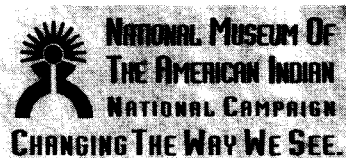
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hush puppies,

succotash, and



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But, besides being on a bland diet, we'd be nutritionally deficient. Lucky for us that balance is a key part of all Indian culture, including meals. So, long before anybody had ever even heard of the four basic food groups, Native Americans were eating a variety of vegetables, grains, fruits, nuts, fowl and fish. Their meals were high in fiber and low in saturated fats.



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Become a Charter Member of the National Museum of the American Indian today. The way we see it, the world might stop being hungry when it is no longer starved for knowledge.



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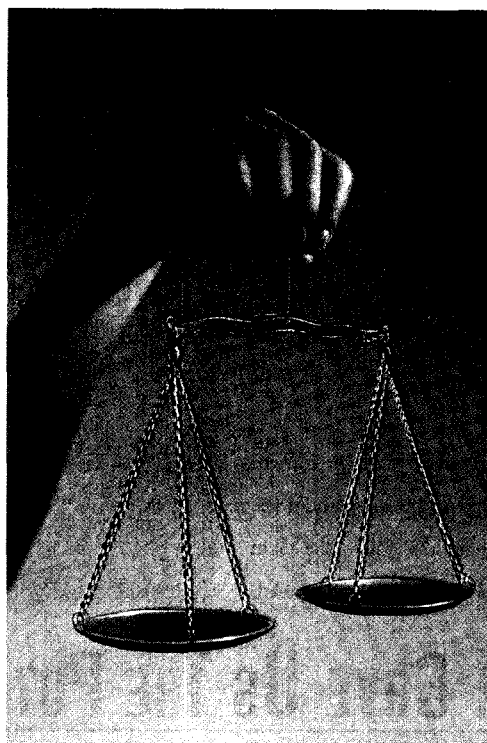
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ent philosophy of national reform. In *The Lincoln Persuasion* (1993), a brilliant, posthumously published study of Lincoln's political thought, the political scientist J. David Greenstone traced the roots of that thought to the communitarian "covenant theology" of seventeenth-century Puritanism. Lincoln combined this theology, with its emphasis on public duty and public purpose, with the nationalism and institutionalism of Henry Clay and other leading Whigs, arriving at a position of "political humanitarianism." Lincoln's synthesis, Greenstone noted, did not deny the importance of individual development, but it did assert that "the improvement of individual and society were almost inseparably joined." Combining moral commitment with political realism, Lincoln arrived at a concept of the public good that resonated deeply among northerners, especially those large segments steeped in the culture of New England. At the time of the Civil War, then, the Democratic and Republican parties were divided not only on the slavery question but also on the larger philosophical question of national responsibility. The Democrats adopted a position of economic and moral laissez-faire, while the Republicans insisted that on certain questions the nation had to do more than formulate procedural rules; it had to make moral judgments and act on them.

This philosophical alignment, persisting through the Civil War and Reconstruction, was blurred during the Gilded Age. Then, over the course of the next forty years, something surprising happened: the parties reversed positions. Populist Democrats in the 1890s weakened their party's attachment to laissez-faire, and after "progressive" Republicans (whose model was Lincoln) failed to take over their party in 1912, many started moving toward the Democrats. Woodrow Wilson welcomed them—and so, twenty years later, did Franklin Roosevelt. By 1936 it was the Democrats who were sounding the Lincolnian themes of national purpose and government responsibility, while the Republicans had become the champions of the autonomous individual. Since then both parties have veered and tacked, sometimes partly embracing each other's doctrines, but today the congressional parties stand as far apart as they were at the height of the New Deal. President Clinton may have muddied the waters with his "me, too, but more moderately" response to Republican retrenchment, but in Congress the programmatic differences between the parties are spelled out almost daily in party-line votes reminiscent of the late 1930s. Now as



then, Republicans emphasize the role of government as a neutral rule maker that encourages private initiative and protects its fruits. Now as then, Democrats emphasize the role of government as a moral leader that seeks to realize public goals unrealizable in the private sphere.

If this analysis is correct, it follows that the proper philosophical home for pro-lifers right now is the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. To test this, go back to that "campaign statement" I sketched earlier and make one simple change: substitute the word "racism" for "abortion." Without much editing the statement would be instantly recognizable as the speech of a liberal Democrat. Democrats know that racism, like abortion, cannot be abolished by governmental fiat. But they also know that it is wrong to subsidize racist teachings publicly or to tolerate racist speech in public institutions or to permit racist practices in large-scale "private" enterprises. Democrats also insist that government has a duty to take the lead in condemning racism and educating our youth about its dangers. In other words, the same formula—grudgingly tolerate, restrict, discourage—that I have applied to abortion is what liberal Democrats have been using to combat racism over the past generation. With abortion, as with racism, we are targeting a practice that is recognized as "wrong" (Hillary Clinton) and "a bad thing" (Kate Michelman). With abortion, as with racism, we are conceding the practical impossibility of outlawing the evil itself but pledging the government's best efforts to make it "rare" (Bill Clinton *et al.*). When it comes to philosophical coherence, therefore, nothing prevents Democrats from adopting my abortion position. Indeed, there is very good reason to adopt it.

It is, however, politically incorrect. Any liberal Democrat taking this stance would incur the wrath of the abortion lobbies. Protests within the party would mount, funding would dry up, connections with the party leadership would be severed, and there might be a primary challenge. Because politicians do not court martyrdom, the intimidatory power of these lobbies is formidable.

But no power lasts forever, and power grounded more in bullying than in reason is particularly vulnerable in our country. Within the liberal left, from which the Democrats draw their intellectual sustenance, there is increasing dissatisfaction with the absolutist dogma of "abortion rights." Nat Hentoff, a columnist in the left-liberal *Village Voice*, wonders why those who dwell so much on "rights" refuse to consider

the bare possibility that unborn human beings may also have a few rights. Hentoff, who is a sort of libertarian liberal, sees a contradiction between abortion and individual rights, but the socialist writer Christopher Hitchens may actually be more in tune with the communitarian bent of post-New Deal liberalism in his critique of pro-choice philosophy. Hitchens caused an uproar among readers and staffers of *The Nation* in 1989 when he published an article in which he observed with approval that more and more of his colleagues were questioning whether “a fetus is ‘only’ a growth in, or appendage to, the female body.” While supporting abortion in some cases, he insisted that society has a vital interest in restricting it. What struck him as ironic, and totally indefensible, was the tendency of many leftists suddenly to become selfish individualists whenever the topic turned to abortion.

It is a pity that . . . the majority of feminists and their allies have stuck to the dead ground of “Me Decade” possessive individualism, an ideology that has more in common than it admits with the prehistoric right, which it claims to oppose but has in fact encouraged.

Hitchens’s critique of the pro-choice position comes from his socialist premises, but even some liberal critics closer to the center have adopted a similar view. *The Good Society* (1991), by the sociologist Robert Bellah and his associates, reads like the campaign book of a decidedly liberal Democratic politician, someone who might challenge Bill Clinton from the left in 1996. The root of what is wrong in America, it says, is our “Lockean political culture,” which emphasizes “the pursuit of individual affluence (the American dream) in a society with a most un-Lockean economy and government.” When the authors get to the topic of abortion, they again see Lockeanism as the culprit: it has turned abortion into an “absolute right.” In place of this kind of extreme individualism they suggest we consider the practices of twenty other Western democracies.

There is respect for the value of a woman’s being able to choose parenthood rather than having it forced upon her, but society also has an interest in a woman’s abortion decision. It is often required that she participate in counselling; she is encouraged to consider the significance of her decision, and she must offer substantial reasons why the potential life of the fetus must be sacrificed and why bearing a child would do her real harm.

Despite its use of the strange term “potential life” (a usage favored by Justice Blackmun) for a living fetus, Bellah’s formulation expresses coherently what modern liberalism points toward but usually resists at the last minute: a responsible communitarian position on abortion. It is not the same as my campaign statement, but it is within debating distance, and setting the two statements side by side might bring together in civil debate reasonable people from both sides.

Of course, neither position would pass muster with NARAL, NOW, the ACLU, and other pro-choice absolutists. But at

some point, I think, sooner rather than later, the grip of these lobbies will have to loosen. One lesson of last year’s congressional elections is that the Democratic Party will suffer at the polls if it is perceived by the public as the voice of entrenched minority factions. For better or worse, the Republicans articulated a philosophy in 1994, while the Democrats, by and large, believed that all they had to do was appeal to “their” people. The party needs to rediscover the idea of a common good, and the abortion issue may be as suitable a place as any to start. But the Democrats will first have to break free of the abortion lobbies. That will be a formidable challenge, though not an impossible one. As the political scientist Jeffrey Berry has observed, one of the most startling features of modern American politics is how quickly political alliances can shift. National politics, Berry writes, no longer works by means of “subgovernments”—cozy two-way relationships between particular lobbyists and politicians. Today we live in a world of “issue networks,” in which many lobbies vie for attention. Something like this, I believe, is starting to happen on women’s issues. One of the fast-growing feminist groups in the country right now is Feminists for Life (FFL), which has offices nationwide and has recently moved its headquarters to Washington, D.C. Founded in the 1970s by former NOW members who had been expelled for their pro-life views, FFL supports almost the entire agenda of feminism—except “abortion rights.” Citing the pro-life stands of the founders of American feminism, including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, they view themselves as reclaiming authentic feminism. Gay-rights groups, usually allied with the abortion lobbies, now include PLAGAL, the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians. In issue networks, Jeffrey Berry observes, alliances can be composed “of both old friends and strange bedfellows”; there are “no permanent allies and no permanent enemies.” The new pragmatic alliances of gays and straights, religious believers and secularists, feminists and traditionalists, may soon be demanding seats at the Democratic table. It would not be surprising if they were welcomed as liberators by many Democrats who have been forced to endorse a Me Decade ideology at odds with the spirit of their party.

## PRO-CHOICE REPUBLICANS

**W**HAT about the Republicans? Where are they headed? It is hard to say. As already noted, on a range of domestic issues the party seems to have embraced a philosophy of possessive individualism that has a distinctly pro-choice ring to it, and in this respect is no longer the party of Lincoln. Lincoln’s Republicanism, as Greenstone pointed out in *The Lincoln Persuasion*, combined a Whiggish sense of national responsibility with a New England ethic of moral perfection. Then as now, Republicans believed in capitalist enterprise and fiscal prudence—but in



those days they put them in the service of broader humanitarian goals. “Republicans,” Lincoln said, “are for both the *man* and the *dollar*; but in cases of conflict, the man *before* the dollar.” This was true for a long time in the Republican Party. Theodore Roosevelt’s notion of “stewardship” had traces of the Lincolnian synthesis of humanitarianism and institutional responsibility; early in this century many of the Progressives came from Republican backgrounds. Even in the 1950s Eisenhower’s brand of “modern Republicanism” faintly echoed the old tradition of active government and moral leadership. Someday, I think, it will be rediscovered. It is a noble tradition.

Right now, though, it is out of season. The Republicans are on a *laissez-faire* roll. The strategy of their leaders is to marginalize right-to-lifers, get their plank out of the platform, and avoid any more messy debates over social issues. They see a golden opportunity to win more recruits by appealing to yuppies and other libertarians who hate taxes and welfare but like “abortion rights.” What can be said to these shrewd Republican leaders? In shrewdness and wiliness it would be hard to match Abraham Lincoln. Let us, then, listen to Lincoln as he warned against weakening his party’s anti-slavery plank in order to win the votes of “moderates.” “In my judgement,” he wrote to an Illinois Republican official in 1859, “such a step would be a serious mistake—would open a gap through which more would pass *out* than pass *in*.” And so today. Many Reagan Democrats came to the Republicans in the 1980s because their own party deserted them on social issues. If the Republicans do the same, many will either drift back to the Democratic Party (many of these, remember, are former New Deal Democrats, rather liberal on economic issues) or join a third party or simply drop out (many evangelicals were apolitical before Reagan came along). For every pro-choice yuppie voter the Republicans won, they might lose two from the “religious right.”

In truth, however, no one can be sure about the gains and losses resulting from one position or another on abortion, and such considerations are beside my main point, which is this: It is time at last in America for the abortion issue to be addressed with candor and clarity by politicians of both major parties. There needs to be *engagement* on the topic. Right now, as the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre puts it, the arguments pro and con on this issue are “incommensurable”—they sail past each other; the two sides are talking about different things. Part of the blame for the mindless “emotivism,” as MacIntyre calls it, can be attributed to the more extreme elements in the pro-life movement, who have stifled reasoned argument with their cries of “Murder!” But much of it results from the squeamishness of pro-choicers, who simply refuse to face up to what abortion is. Nervousness, guilt, even anguish, are all hidden behind abstract, Latinate phrases. Only rarely does reality intrude. That is why Christopher Hitchens caused such a howl of pain when he published his *Nation* article on abortion. His crack about the

“possessive individualism” of pro-choicers undoubtedly caused discomfort, but what must have touched a raw nerve was his description of abortion itself. After sympathizing with the emotions of rank-and-file members of the pro-life movement—with their “genuine, impressive, unforced revulsion at the idea of a disposable fetus”—Hitchens added,

But anyone who has ever seen a sonogram or has spent even an hour with a textbook on embryology knows that emotions are not the deciding factor. In order to terminate a pregnancy, you have to still a heartbeat, switch off a developing brain and, whatever the method, break some bones and rupture some organs.

Here, then, is the center of it all. If abortion had nothing to do with the stilling of heartbeats and brains, there would be no abortion controversy.

Suppose, now, I were to define the controversy in this manner: It is a fight between those who are horrified by the above-mentioned acts, considering them immoral, and those who are not horrified and do not consider them immoral. “Unfair,” most pro-choicers would say. “We are also horrified. Have we not said that we abhor abortion? Have we not called it wrong? Have we not said it should be rare?” All right, then, let the debate begin: How rare should it be? How can we make it rare? In what ways, if any, can public institutions be used to discourage abortion? If abortion means stilled hearts and ruptured organs, how much of that can we decently permit?

In this debate I have made my own position clear. It is a pro-life position (though it may not please all pro-lifers), and its model is Lincoln’s position on slavery from 1854 until well into the Civil War: tolerate, restrict, discourage. Like Lincoln’s, its touchstone is the common good of the nation, not the sovereign self. Like Lincoln’s position, it accepts the legality but not the moral legitimacy of the institution that it seeks to contain. It invites argument and negotiation; it is a gambit, not a gauntlet.

The one thing certain right now is that the abortion controversy is not going to wither away, because the anguish that fuels it keeps regenerating. Some Americans may succeed in desensitizing themselves to what is going on, as many did with slavery, but most Americans feel decidedly uncomfortable about the stilled heartbeats and brains of 1.5 million human fetuses every year. The discomfort will drive some portion of that majority to organize and protest. Some will grow old or weary, and will falter, but others will take their place. (I have seen it already: there are more and more young faces in the annual “march for life.”) Pro-life protests will continue, in season and out of season, with political support or without it. Abortion, a tragedy in everyone’s estimation, will continue to darken our prospect until we find practicable ways of dealing with it in order to make it rare. But before we can even hope to do that, we have to start talking with one another honestly, in honest language. ☞



## Henry Miller and George Orwell

by NANCY CALDWELL SOREL

**W**HEN, late in December of 1936, George Orwell stopped over in Paris on his way to Spain to fight for the Loyalist cause, the only person he took time to see was the American expatriate Henry Miller. Orwell had reviewed *Tropic of Cancer*—a plotless, sexually explicit novel based on Miller's own raw experiences in Paris, which the Englishman had praised as "truthful and even moving." He shared Miller's distrust of authority and felt the author understood him, knew the kind of person he was. A correspondence had ensued, and before catching the night train, Orwell paid Miller a call.

Both men were dropouts from mainstream backgrounds. After Eton and five years with the Indian Imperial Police in Burma, Orwell had submerged himself in the underclass, had shared the lives of the poor and then surfaced to write *Down and Out in London and Paris*. But his actions were a means to inspire change, not, like Miller's, an end in themselves, private forays into degradation and anarchy. The profoundly unpolitical Miller had no desire to change anything.

Certainly not in Spain. It was idiotic to go there out of a sense of obligation, he told Orwell, and this idea of defending democracy was plain stupid. Liberty was a personal thing; it allowed one to avoid public responsibility and live as one wished. Orwell, however, argued that liberty and democracy were important—think what fascism would do to the freedom of the artist. He confided his guilt at having aided imperialism in Burma. But had he not punished himself enough? Miller asked. Still, the earnestness of the younger man touched him. In later years they would disappoint each other—when Miller's egoism surpassed his talents, when Orwell's reviews were less flattering and Miller wrote him off as just another dumb English idealist. But that evening, in the studio lighted against the winter dark, Henry unearthed a warm corduroy jacket for George. It was his contribution to the Republican cause, he said, and he refrained from mentioning that he would have given Orwell the jacket no matter which side he had chosen to fight for.



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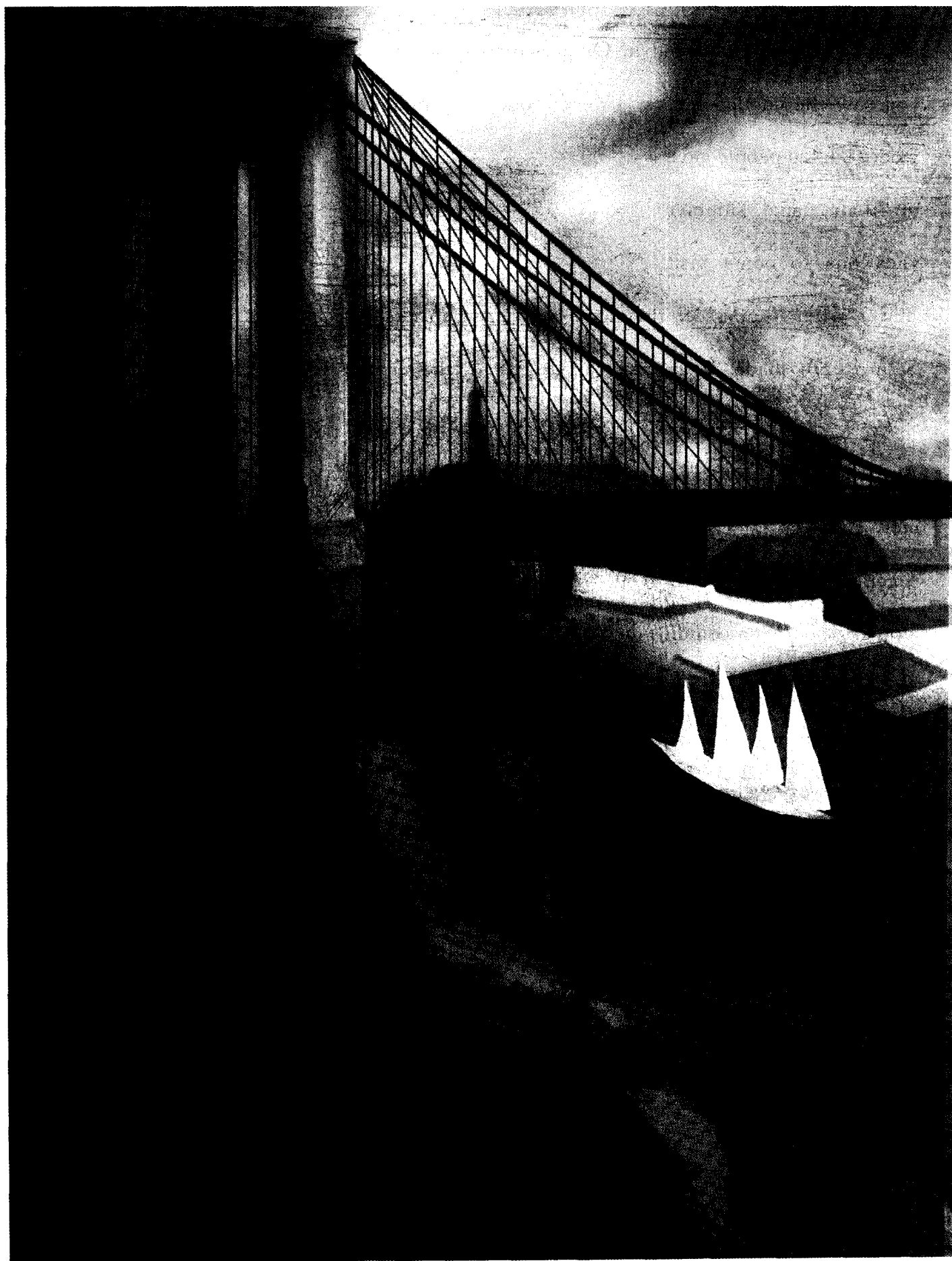


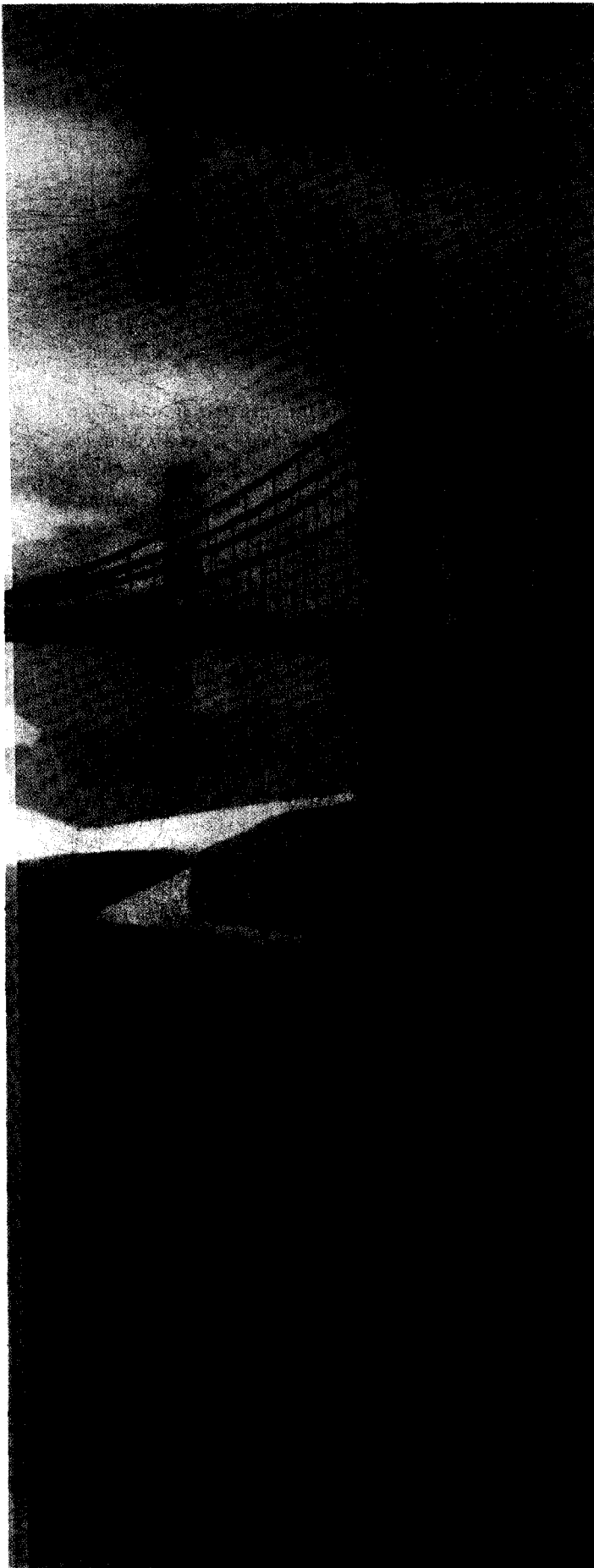
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# Colonel Roebling's Friend

by CHARLES DICKINSON

Howard watched men go  
into the caisson's air lock at  
the beginning of the day and exit  
diminished—coated with mud,  
their skin a pale gray, so exhausted  
they stretched out on the ground  
as soon as they hit the open air.  
They looked shrunken,  
wrung dry

**T**HOUSANDS paid a penny on Decoration Day to stroll along the elevated promenade of the week-old New York-Brooklyn Bridge. The crowds exulted in the view of New York Harbor, with its sparkling of ferries, lighters, barques, and excursion steamers, the stack puffs of coal smoke, the carefree geometry of sails. The ten-story Western Union Telegraph Building and the huge new post office were pointed out, as was Bedloe's Island, where *Liberty Enlightening the World* would be unveiled in three years. It was exciting to be alive in 1883—alive in a city packed tight horizontally, and beginning to grow vertically in response. It was almost a blessing to walk in the salt breeze and sunshine, to be part of a world floating on a bridge suspended in midair.

Howard Alston was present, in his chair; his wife, Eva, pushed. Their son, William, brought up the rear. An old black silk hat covered Howard's head; two fists of white whiskers were clenched at his cheeks. He was talking, and the crowds were so thick that he might have been addressing any of several dozen people all around him. Eva's attention was elsewhere.



William did not even pretend to listen. He was a tall young man with a ruddy face and whiskers that declared his basic confusion: lopsided moustache, sideburns wildly out of balance. Even his eyes were slightly crossed.

The cause of William's consternation, Dreamina Trobst, had set foot on the new bridge before almost any other "civilian" (the pejorative William's father used for all who hadn't helped to build it). Light on her feet, bold, the daughter of Wilhelm Trobst, a Brooklyn sand-and-gravel baron with a house on Columbia Heights, she had possessed two of the 7,000 specially printed blue tickets that provided access to the bridge hours before the masses were given permission to set foot on it, at midnight on May 24.

"Take me," William had begged.

"No, sweet, I've promised someone else."

Later she recounted how she had darted and cooed her way to the front. "There I was, practically the very first person onto the Great East River Bridge," Dreamina said. "Certainly the very first young lady."

William said, "My father, who is a personal friend of Colonel Roebling's, asked that you accompany us when we make our first family visit."

"Darling," Dreamina said, "I've already seen it."

The bridge's river span had a gentle upward curve. At the approximate apex of this curve Howard held up a hand. Eva stopped. Howard shifted in his wicker seat so that his eye could follow the four bucket-thick cables as they descended from the top of the Brooklyn tower and swept down and up again in a catenary curve to the top of the New York tower. Howard waved William forward, urged him to appreciate the graceful cable line.

William dutifully followed the cable from one end to the other. The sensation was admittedly slightly thrilling—the plummeting and widening of the cable as it came toward him, the rising and threading away again almost to nothing. As for his father's old story, his one story, Howard jabbered on but William declined to follow.

Eva looked back through the Gothic arches of the Brooklyn tower. Her beloved St. Ann's Church had been used to sight the bridge's center line. Her family's old James Street apartment had been demolished to make way for the Brooklyn anchorage, where the bridge cables were rooted. Her husband sat talking to himself of past accomplishments, struck down by a job she had insisted he pursue.

Prior to that job Howard had not worked since returning home from the war. He provided the occasional string of fish from the river, and he kept an eye on young William when Eva needed to be away. She took in a little wash and sold sandwiches at the ferry-houses. When the Brooklyn *Eagle* carried an announcement of the need for men to help dig beneath the New York bridge-tower caisson, Eva waved the paper in her husband's face. "Two twenty-five a day," she said.

"Why don't you just bury me alive?" Howard asked.

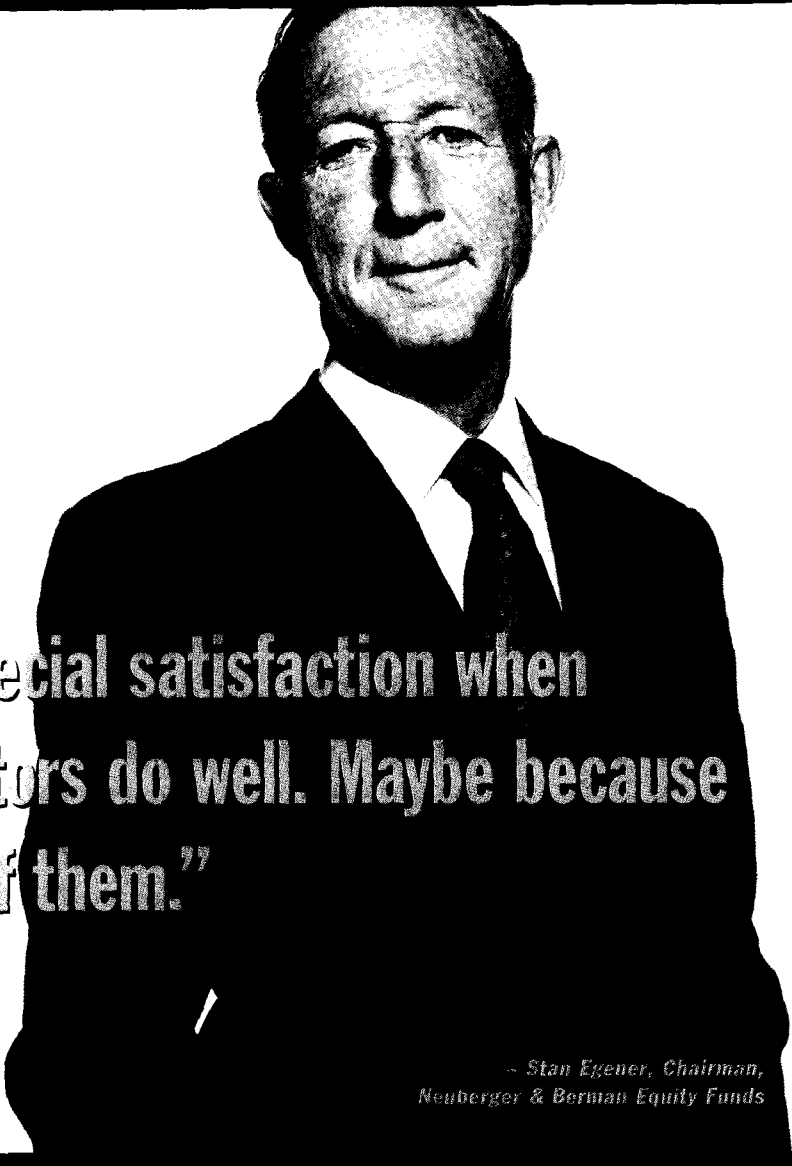
In 1870 he had watched the Brooklyn caisson being launched. He'd stood with the doubting mob at the Webb & Bell shipyard, and cheered when the caisson—like a mammoth upside-down box—slid smoothly down the ways and into the river. Weighing 3,000 tons, covering an area the size of half a city block, the caisson would be pumped full of compressed air to keep the water out while men excavated the riverbed from inside. The caisson's sides narrowed at the bottom to a knife-like V designed to cut through the riverbed as courses of timber and stone were stacked on top and the men dug from within, down through mud and clay and basalt and sandstone until the caisson reached its final solid footing. It would then be filled with cement, and on this base the Brooklyn tower would rise.

Howard watched men go into the caisson's air lock at the beginning of the day and exit diminished—coated with mud, their skin a pale gray, so exhausted they stretched out on the ground as soon as they hit the open air. They looked shrunk-en, wrung dry. As the caisson descended and the air pressure increased, the amount of time men were allowed to be inside was reduced. But with each additional pound of pressure the work squeezed them, and this winnowing process required the bridge company constantly to hire fresh workers. A line of men could always be found to take the place of workers who didn't want to go back down.

Howard joined such a line a year later. A ferry conveyed him to the New York side; he carried a lunch pail and a quart of beer, fully expecting to be told to come back later, or not to come back at all, and thus to be set free to do as he pleased. Two dollars and twenty-five cents a day was a salary beyond anything he had ever earned, yet he delayed, idling away the morning in Franklin Square and considering his options.

He had taken a full two years getting home after the war. Shot through the leg near Vicksburg, he wrote Eva letters reporting on his convalescence along the way, as he rested his wound in places like Cincinnati, Charleston, and Pittsburgh. She saved the letters, possibly to chart his meandering course, possibly as evidence of his reluctance to return to his wife and son. Rereading his words at home, he was moved by how impressed and excited he had been by the people he met. Everywhere he stopped, men were building: houses, roads, bridges, railroads. He was offered more jobs in passing than he could count. If he'd been able to work without pain, he was sure he'd have taken some of them up on their offers.

But that inspiration was short-lived. Home was an enervating place, with a young, noisy son and a wife who worried about money. His wound was too fresh for sustained labor. He took to disappearing on long walks, to "build my strength," he told Eva. She made him take William along, to discourage his stopping at taverns and joining clusters of ne'er-do-well friends. William was growing taller almost with each step, and Howard's efforts to outwalk him, tire him out, failed, and in fact had the unintended consequence of actually improving Howard's condition.



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On one such walk he found a job for William: sweeping up after the carriage teams at Brooklyn's Hotel Pompadour. It was a job William knew enough not to settle for. He worked up from horse tender to bellboy to bell captain by the age of fifteen. William saw the New York caisson ad in the *Eagle* and took it to his mother, wanting her to lie about his age so that he could get the job. As Hotel Pompadour bell captain, he made a dollar less a day, even with tips. Eva didn't want her son in such a job, but she took the ad to her husband.

"Buried alive or living alone," she said. "Those are your choices."

**H**OWARD always said that the story of his life began when he saw Colonel Washington Augustus Roebling emerge from the New York caisson's air lock.

His beard was speckled with mud and trimmed in the fashion made popular by President Grant. He was followed out of the air lock by three other men, each blinking and grimacing, each with an armload of documents. Roebling's expression was a mixture of anxiety and excitement. His father, John Augustus Roebling, the millionaire wire manufacturer from Trenton and the designer of the East River Bridge, had died three years before. A freak accident had necessitated the amputation of toes, and because of John Roebling's stubbornness and insistence on treating himself, lockjaw set in.

The son was left to carry on with the father's project.

Roebling blinked and swallowed and made a face that registered an all-consuming pain. Its intensity frightened Howard so much that he nearly stepped out of the line. It was common knowledge in Brooklyn that Roebling had suffered horrible attacks of caisson disease—the bends—but that in his zeal to be near the work he continued to expose himself.

Roebling fixed his eyes intently on the first man in line.

"Are you sound?" Howard was asked.

"A slight limp, Colonel," he began, "but otherwise—"

"Let me see."

Howard self-consciously paraded in front of Roebling and the other men, a sudden intense desire to be part of the project forcing him to minimize the small hitch that had dogged his gait since that afternoon above Vicksburg.

"Roll up your pants leg."

Howard did as ordered. The scar was a half inch to the right of his shinbone, a little white star that still ached to the touch. Roebling leaned down to inspect it closely.

"Where?" he asked.

"Near Vicksburg."

"Heard it was bad down there," Roebling said.

"Couldn't have been worse than Antietam Creek, Colonel."

Roebling gave him an appraising look. "Bring a big lunch tomorrow, Vicksburg. Working in a pneumatic caisson gives a man a powerful appetite."

Howard Alston went with the other men down a spiral

staircase into the caisson air lock. No one spoke. An attendant with plugged ears swung the hatch shut and secured it with turns of a wheel. All the men who had been down in the caisson put their fingers in their ears, so those who hadn't did too. A valve was opened and a high-pitched, deafening shriek of air commenced. The attendant monitored the air pressure on a gauge near his station. As the whistling slowly died away, pressure began to squeeze Howard's skull. A thread of lightning snaked through his brain from ear to ear. When the whistling ceased, a hatchway in the floor fell open. A whiff of warm sewage blew over the men. They went down a ladder into the New York caisson.

The walls had been whitewashed to improve visibility and the mood of the men, but Howard was not cheered by his first look underground. Ghostly blue-white limelight, fed by compressed oxygen and coal gas, threw shadows into every corner and across the roof, which hung oppressively low, a constant reminder of the thousands of tons of stone and wood bearing down.

The new men were herded into a knot and given shovels. The sewage smell was pervasive; the caisson was going down at the point where New York had for years dumped its waste, and as the shovels turned up the black muck, a stench almost visible in its intensity was set loose. A thin film of water was allowed in to damp down the stink.

Howard's bad leg immediately began to throb in counterpoint to his pounding head. He took a moment to wipe away the sweat sluicing down his face, to look around and appreciate his situation. He was shoveling shit for a living. Something his own son had moved beyond.

A foreman jumped to his side. His voice had a high-pitched, feminine tint in the compressed atmosphere: "Not what y'expected, old man? Think y're too good t'be spading feces? Got twenty above waiting t'fill your boots."

On Howard's third day in the caisson Colonel Roebling noticed him earnestly digging, working bare-chested like nearly everyone else.

"Hello, Vicksburg," Roebling said, his voice also squeezed high. "Leg holding up?"

"Thank you, sir. Yes."

"What do you think of our man-made pit of Acheron?"

"A little warm, sir. Smells a bit."

"Our borings show we'll be through the sewage field in a day or two. Any other complaints? Any pain? Cramping? Nausea? Even when you're at home?"

"My wife can be an irritant, but otherwise I'm fit," Howard said.

In a week they were through the sewage and into river sand and gravel. Pipes in the ceiling which released compressed air were also employed to suck away the excavated sand. Men who had dug the Brooklyn caisson worked with chipper good humor; the New York caisson, by comparison, was practically falling toward bedrock. It descended nearly a foot a day for weeks at a time. On the Brooklyn side, where



boulders had to be removed, the average rate of descent had been not even a half foot a week. The old hands would have whistled, if whistling were possible in the compressed air.

William met his father's ferry at the end of the day and they walked home together, William in his coat and bowler, Howard in his mud-spattered clothes. William was troubled by the exhaustion in his father's face. Great gray half moons hung under his eyes, and he carried himself with a stooping limp that appeared one stumble away from total collapse. He complained of never being able to feel completely washed and of not sleeping. But at the dinner table he ate as much as three men, and his salary had given Eva the freedom to dream of a new apartment. She had never liked their current two-room home; it always felt forced upon her, as if they'd had to grab the first thing available when the bridge came through and their building was torn down.

Eva had been the beautiful girl on her block, a fact that felt important until her father ran away. He was a handsome, wide-shouldered man, only a bit of a drinker, the favorite of women up and down James Street. He worked twelve hours a day in a glue factory and hauled ice in the summer to make extra money. The mixture of physical attractiveness, industriousness, and relative sobriety made him too irresistible to other women for Eva's mother to counter it. He went to Long Island with an ice customer's wife and was never seen again.

The young Dock Street man who would become Eva's husband took his lunch at noon on a porch facing the second-story window where she hung her mother's wash. They talked to each other across this distance for weeks before they met on the street. He wore the filthy apron of a blacksmith's lackey. Her mother said this was good; the young man was open-minded about hard work. On occasion Eva's mother sat back out of the young man's line of sight to feed her daughter questions. He didn't pursue her, although at times she wished he would; he seemed content to see her face in the window. She was flattered that he could get so lost in their conversation that the blacksmith had to scold him for wasting time.

**H**OWARD undressed out in the hall, mud-caked pants crackling as they fell. Neighbors watched; he didn't care. The caisson was now forty feet down. Climbing out against all that weight was real torture. At dinner one evening he lifted a spoonful of soup to his mouth and then flung it away like an impish child, his body gripped, scalp to

toenails, by a pain that took such hold of him it did not even permit him to scream. Only his shoulder blades and the backs of his thighs were touching the chair. His mouth was wrenched open in a silent snarl of pain. A drop of soup fell from the ceiling and splashed on his forehead.

Eva and William carried him to bed, and he remained in deep pain for three hours. Howard described it as cramps of the worst magnitude, burning clenches of muscle deep in his legs, thighs, and abdomen. Other men in the caisson had talked in whispers about the bends. A restless fraternity of frightened men was going deeper each day. As the caisson descended, the attacks increased in frequency and intensity. Howard said nothing at work about his own attack. He had never been in a job where sickness was not counted a liability.

Several days afterward William was late to meet his father and found him laid out on a bench in the ferry-house. He was being attended to by a man who didn't look

so good himself. A small, respectful crowd stood watching the man force sips of coffee through Howard's clenched teeth.

William lifted his father under the arms, the man took his feet, and they carried him home.

"I am Colonel Roebbling," the man said to Eva. "I was on the Fulton Ferry, coming over to address a problem at the Brooklyn tower, when your husband was stricken by the caisson disease. I've had bouts myself. Coffee might help. A vigorous rub with a solution of salt and whiskey may restore sensation."

"We have salt," Eva said. "But no whiskey."

Roebbling took William by the arm. "Your son will bring you back a bottle." He knelt by Howard's head and said, "Come back to work only when you're able, Vicksburg."

As it happened, he never was.

The salt-and-whiskey rub returned some muscle control, enough for Howard to swing his legs off the bed and sit up. But he could not stand. He said that pain of exquisite precision pierced his joints. He reported, almost with pride, that the core of his spine bubbled like a tube of molten metal. At night he shivered and vomited. Eva stayed by his side to hold the bowl, or to wipe his face with a cool cloth. Howard's eyes never left her, never let her forget that this had been her idea.

What little money they had saved dwindled away. William, in his role of bell captain, was able to extend his own hours, for the extra money and for the freedom from witnessing his father's agony. Work and his personal pursuits kept him away from home for all but the deepest hours of the night.

Eva announced one morning that she was going to the



bridge office on the Brooklyn side. "We must apply for your disability payment," she said.

"Don't you dare trouble Colonel Roebling with our problems," Howard said. "He has a bridge to build."

When she was gone, Howard stood up. He was three steps from the window, no handholds on the way. He reached that goal and leaned on the sill. Below was a policeman having a smoke with a ring of layabouts. Howard's legs and feet felt prickly with blood sensations. He'd been standing up once or twice a day in secret for a good two weeks. One morning the certainty of his being able to stand was just there. Eva was in the next room, so he had had to wait to test his new power. Dizziness almost knocked him over the first time he stood. Shuffling followed, and then steps. He was undecided about when to tell his family.

Rumors about Colonel Roebling's deteriorating health were commonplace, but Eva found him at his desk in the bridge office. He looked even more tired than her husband. A knot of assistants hovered as if to catch him when he fell.

"I've come to apply for my husband's disability," she announced, and in ways she couldn't help, she felt ashamed.

Someone placed a checkbook in front of Colonel Roebling. It was the size of an accountant's ledger, with a gold-embossed green-leather cover, containing pages of checks as stiff as stock certificates. Eva was impressed at the speed of service as Roebling took a pen and signed his name. The check was torn from its binding and set aside. Eva glimpsed it: \$77,500, payable to a stone company.

"And your husband is . . . ?" an assistant asked.

Eva said Howard's name. Colonel Roebling did not look up from his work.

"And how was he disabled?" the assistant asked.

"Caisson disease," Eva said.

"Disability payment for the bends is a hundred dollars," the assistant intoned.

"That's all? He may never walk again," Eva said.

A form was presented to her. "Fill this out, please. In the outer room."

She did so, sitting alone at a desk covered with blueprints, paperwork, and a box of bridge-company stationery. Eva took a fresh sheet and calculated that with the disability, Howard's total pay for his work on the bridge had come to not quite \$170. She saw Colonel Roebling for the last time as his office door closed on her. He was at his desk, pen set down, rubbing the bones in his writing hand.

William's last look at him had been the evening when Colonel Roebling walked him down the block in search of whiskey. The citizens of Brooklyn made a fuss over the famous bridge builder, and by extension over the young man worthy enough to merit his company. At a tavern two blocks from home Roebling introduced William to the barkeep, a small man in a dirty blue shirt and green bow tie, who never took his eyes off the colonel.

"This young man has my permission to purchase a bottle

of whiskey," Roebling announced. "For today, and for any time in the future. His father is a most excellent and industrious bridge worker and a war veteran who has been struck down by the caisson disease. The whiskey is strictly for massage purposes."

William and Colonel Roebling parted with a handshake in the street. William hurried home that night to mix the rub that would bring feeling back to his father; he was entrusted with its composition day after day, his mother with its application. William could no longer recall the moment in his preparations when he set a cupful of whiskey aside to assuage his curiosity, but he never forgot the first taste. He was one of those poor souls who had no choice and no chance. He gladly put up with the barkeep's same joke each time he came in to buy: "Your pa must be rubbed clear away by now."

**I**N August of 1876, four years after Howard's attack of the bends, a note on bridge-company stationery arrived at the Alston apartment. It was from Colonel Roebling, to Mr. Howard Alston at their address, requesting Howard's presence at the first crossing of the bridge. The two imposing stone towers, each rising 276 feet six inches above the water, had been completed, and a "traveler" wire had been strung between them. The traveler was driven by a steam engine mounted on the Brooklyn anchorage. This wire link would open the way for the bridge's succeeding strands of cable and connection. The bridge's master mechanic, E. F. Farrington, was selected to ride the traveler in a boatswain's chair and become the first man to cross the East River in such a fashion.

A holiday excitement coursed through Brooklyn's streets the morning of August 25. The city, both cities, had grown accustomed to the slow rise of the huge stone towers. But the project had already taken seven years—so long that the actual goal seemed almost to be forgotten; two cities were building opposing, mirroring structures for no apparent reason. Political corruption, the hand of William Marcy Tweed, bad weather, lack of money, Colonel Roebling's increasing absence from the job sites—each problem was solved and the towers kept growing. Then the traveler wire went across in early August and filled a gap in the public's imagination. Suddenly they saw what was possible.

Eva rolled her husband through the streets that day. Colonel Roebling's invitation had been little more than a reminder that the crossing was to be made; no special seating was set aside, and the colonel himself would not be present. Howard insisted that they leave especially early to get a riverside vantage, but by eight o'clock the best seats were long taken. They had to settle for a spot in the sun two blocks from the river, halfway between the Brooklyn tower and the anchorage.

Eva had packed a lunch of cheese and eel sandwiches, deviled eggs, apple quarters, and a bottle of water. She stood directly behind Howard, shielding her eyes with her hand. The day was quite hot. The last four years showed more on

# The Only Busy Signal You Get From This Government Agency



## Is The Sound Of People Working

It used to be a nightmare to call Ohio's Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Callers either got a busy signal or sat on hold for minutes on end. Thousands got so frustrated they just hung up. Government wasn't working for them.

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This is not an isolated reform. In Ohio they're changing how government works. Every agency and every office. It's part of a new labor-management partnership between the Governor and the state's 37,000-member public employees union, OCSEA/AFSCME Local 11.

One agency has already saved \$304,000 helping troubled youth; another office saved 59,000 work hours by eliminating duplicate procedures; one garage team extended the life of its dump trucks by four years.

The Ohio program – Quality Services Through Partnership (QSTP) – shows how services can improve when front-line workers have a say in how the work gets done. Ohio Governor George Voinovich, a Republican, put it this way: "Without the partnership of our unions, QSTP would be just another flavor of the month."

Ohio's initiative is what successful corporations have been doing. Treat front-line workers as resources. Involve them in decisions. Empower them to meet the public's needs. Cut unnecessary management layers. Redesign the government workplace.

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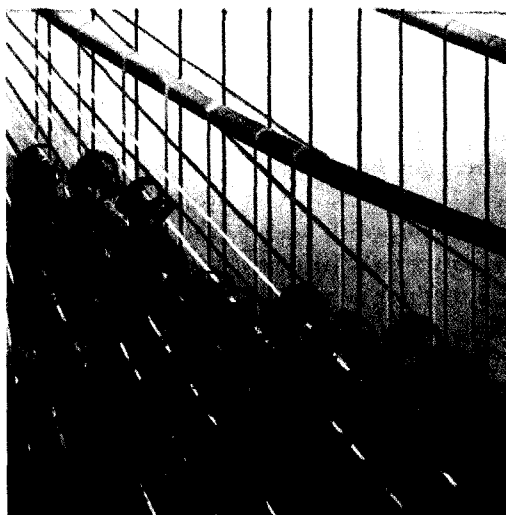
her than on her husband; he had transformed himself into the figure of the invalid bridge builder, the close friend of Colonel Roebling. He had become his story. She was left with the adjunct role of provider and realist. But when their circumstances made her blue, she felt ashamed; Howard was resolutely cheerful even in the face of his helplessness. He encouraged her to have hope, and to get out more, out from under the dead weight of his situation.

At noon Eva and Howard ate their sandwiches and drank half the water, following the example of the workers they could see on the tower. They would have an excellent view of the first leg of Farrington's ride. Hundreds of people milled in the street, all of them walking with their eyes raised, afraid of missing something. Roofs were jammed, and Eva worried that someone would get bumped over the edge in all the excitement. She waved to friends from St. Ann's. Men stopped to have a word with Howard. A woman whose son had been killed with Custer that summer in the Montana Territory waved hello. Eva said a prayer for William, who more and more bore the fruit stink of whiskey, but was alive.

A blessed shadow grew over them from behind; the shade's coolness raised her spirits. She could see women spinning parasols on the Brooklyn tower, and men in high silk hats, and a little after one o'clock an outsize American flag was unfurled, and then another just like it was unrolled on the New York tower. Men with red signal flags sent messages across the river.

"It's E. F.," Howard said, and pointed above.

E. Frank Farrington, a strong, wiry man almost sixty years old, was being strapped into a boatswain's chair on the lip of the Brooklyn anchorage, eighty feet above the street. The crowd went dead quiet for just a moment's anticipation, and then the engine revved and Farrington was sent swinging out over Brooklyn. A cannon went off nearby. Half-way between the anchorage and the Brooklyn tower Farrington un-lashed himself and stood up on the chair's narrow board seat to wave and doff his hat to the thousands of cheering people following him at a run through the streets. He got very small from Howard and Eva's perspective as he rose toward the tower. Minutes passed as his chair was transported across the tower and onto the wire spanning the river. A trumpeting of boat whistles, bells, and horns was heard off that way, almost loud enough to bear Farrington across on the longest segment of his journey. By the time they could see him out over the river, he was just a dot in the sky, the street was empty in front of them, and it was nearly quiet.



COLONEL Roebling moved to a house at 110 Columbia Heights, in Brooklyn, southwest of the bridge, with a perfect view of his creation. He was still in charge, but from a distance; his assistants and his wife, Emily, carried out his instructions. Few people saw him; he was variously reported to be insane, physically debilitated, emotionally exhausted, or even dead. Yet the bridge was his presence. The four cables, each fifteen and three quarters inches in diameter, were strung from the anchorages, over the towers, and across the river, and then wire was wrapped tight around them from end to end. The roadbed was hung from suspenders affixed to these thick cables. Diagonal stays fanned from the tops of the towers down to the bridge floor and were fastened every fifteen feet. The wood planking for the elevated promenade was put down. The day of the bridge's opening approached.

Howard wanted Eva to push him to Columbia Heights, so that he could sit in the shade across the street and imagine Colonel Roebling upstairs, a fellow caisson invalid, scanning the progress of his bridge through a powerful spyglass.

But Eva had taken a job at the Kings County public library, and was so good at her work that she was allowed to perform most of the duties of the head librarian, a Mr. Tetter, all for forty cents a day. She was thus away from home for long hours, and so Howard had to get William to push him to 110 Columbia Heights.

William had plenty of time. His clothes were second-hand grand, befitting a down-at-heel hotelier between postings. On just such a visit Dreamina Trobst first appeared, rolling past in a gleaming victoria; five minutes later she

walked out the front door of her father's mansion, leaving on a feigned errand simply to get a closer look at the tall, handsome, dissolute male nurse who had nipped unashamedly at a silver flask as her coach had carried her past. Dreamina was shapely, petite, auburn-haired, and had only that morning entered the brief phase in a rich girl's life when she wishes to dally with a man beneath her station just for the experience.

She forthrightly approached the tall man and his wheelchair-bound charge. The nurse's eyes were attractively dismal with drink

and disappointment. She chatted as if talking to strangers were the most normal thing for her. The encounter was doubly exciting because she was hidden by parkway trees from the windows of her father's house; she nudged the nurse into a blind spot behind the man in the chair and mimed tipping a flask to her lips. She had no idea what to expect. The flask

A semi spills  
mayonnaise  
over four lanes  
of freeway.

The PM commute  
comes to a stop.

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for another  
couple of hours.

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was utilitarian in the extreme, without filigree or monogram; the taste burned her throat and made her cough a mist out over the head of the cripple.

"You must call upon her," Howard said later. "It would be a profitable match."

William asked Dreamina if he might accompany her to the city. She had other plans until William explained that the city he had in mind was New York, not Brooklyn. The evening itself was heartbreaking; the waiters all knew Dreamina's name, and bussed her cheek as if they were listening to her purr. At the end of dinner she displayed two blue tickets to the special pre-opening celebration of the New York-Brooklyn Bridge. William waited to be invited.

"My father built the bridge," he said with empty conviction. "He's a close friend of Colonel Roebling's."

"I'd love to meet him someday," Dreamina replied. "And your father, too."

**H**OWARD was awaiting his own blue tickets. A story was going around that every man who built the bridge, along with the families of the more than twenty men who had been killed on the job, would be invited to the opening ceremonies.

"Colonel Roebling invited me to Farrington's crossing," Howard said. "Certainly he'd invite me to the grand opening."

On May 22, two days before the event, Eva was at the library and Howard was alone when a messenger arrived, not with blue tickets but with a hatbox. Inside was a high black silk hat, a bit worn around the inner band, but otherwise in excellent condition. It fit Howard as if it had been made for him. A piece of yellowed bridge-company stationery in the box read, "This hat, like you and me, is as old as the bridge. Your friend, Colonel Roebling."

It was the finest hat Howard had ever owned. He was standing before the mirror, admiring himself, when William came home. Whiskey made William's crossed eyes fall in farther toward each other, as if his body had to decide whether to keep him standing or keep his eyes marginally aligned. He was already falling toward the bed in his room when he went past his father.

On May 24 Howard asked Eva to push him to 110 Columbia Heights. The street was being swept clean by a phalanx of city workers, and well before noon a crowd had gathered. The front door of the Roebling house never quite closed entirely, as florists and caterers and uniformed police officers and expensively dressed men and women rushed in and out. A special canvas canopy was erected from the door to the street. The front of the house was caked with flags, flowers, and the coats of arms of both New York and Brooklyn. Howard napped in the shade, and as he slept, Eva negotiated his chair across Columbia Heights to a point she hoped would be at the front of the crowd.

Late in the afternoon President Arthur arrived with Seth

Low, the young mayor of Brooklyn who had tried unsuccessfully to have Colonel Roebling removed as chief engineer from the bridge project. Arthur was a former customs collector who had been thrust into the presidency when Garfield was assassinated. Even after two years in the job he seemed uncertain he belonged there. He had a big doubtful smile on his face as he proceeded from his coach and through the cheering crowd to the Roebling house, passing within an arm's length of Howard but declining to shake his hand. New York Governor Grover Cleveland, however, not far removed from his political roots as mayor of Buffalo, paused in his arrival to take Howard's hand in a sweaty, fleeting grip. But he heard nothing that Howard said.

**A** WEEK later, at four o'clock on Decoration Day, Eva and Howard and William finally made their way to the narrow stairs leading down from the elevated promenade to the New York end of the bridge. Crowds moving in both directions were packed so tight that Eva despaired of ever getting home that night. She looked longingly down at the ploughing ferries, crowded but moving. Howard sat with his face turned out toward the river, fighting the impulse to stand and push his way through the mob so that he could breathe.

A woman screamed just ahead, and Eva felt the thousands packed behind her surge forward to see. A girl in a bluebird hat was knocked off balance and fell in slow motion under the wheels of Howard's chair. William tried to reach for her, but his arms were pinned. She was suspended by the crush at an approximately forty-five-degree angle in front of Howard's legs. Eva saw frightened children bobbing to the top of the crowd like corks and then being passed hand to hand over the heads. People screamed hopelessly at those behind to go back, turn back. The friction of the mass shredded clothing. People were sanded like wood against the promenade's sides. Others fought against the press at their backs to keep from being pushed downstairs, and then went over with a cry. Eva saw a woman up ahead, blue-faced, blood running from her ears, die. One of twelve to be killed, she would prove to be. William's flask cap was popped off and whiskey squirted onto his shirt. Howard felt the sides of his chair collapsing in on him with a crackling of wicker. He jumped up to get free but could only half stand, for Eva was pressed against him over the back of the chair.

She gasped in his ear. "William said he saw you standing up. I thought he was drunk."

"It's a miracle," Howard declared.

Eva's hands were trapped, so she bit the brim of Howard's silk hat and worked it like a dog until it came off his head.

He fought her for it.

"That hat is a gift from Colonel Roebling," Howard said, hoping to be overheard.

"No," Eva said. "It was from me." 🐦



# TWO POEMS

by Richard Wilbur



## BONE KEY

*"He used to call his body Brother Ass. . . ."—Saint Bonaventure, Life of Saint Francis*

You would think that here, at least,  
In dens by night, on tawny sands by day,  
Poor Brother Ass would be a kingly beast.  
So does the casuarina seem to say,

Whose kindred haziness  
Of head is flattering to a bloodshot eye;  
So too the palm's blown shadows, which caress  
Anointed brows and bodies where they lie,

And Angel's Trumpets, which  
Proclaim a musky scent in fleshly tones.  
Yet in this island soil that's only rich  
In rock and coral and Calusa bones,

It's hardihood that thrives,  
As when a screw pine that the gale has downed,  
Shooting new prop-roots from its trunk, survives  
In bristling disarray by change of ground,

Or the white mangrove, nursed  
In sea-soaked earth and air, contrives to expel  
From leafstalk glands the salt with which it's cursed,  
Or crotons, scorched as by the flames of Hell,

Protectively attire  
Their leaves in leather, and so move to and fro  
In the hot drafts that stir the sun's harsh fire,  
Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

## COMPULSIONS

The Reader's tyrannous desires compel  
The weary, bored Pornographer to tell  
Again, and then once more, and then anew,  
The shameful things that lustful monsters do  
To a blameless victim—chained, or drugged, or tied—  
With whom the Reader feels identified.

# THE GREAT SORTING

by NICHOLAS LEMANN

*The first mass administrations of a scholastic-aptitude test led with surprising speed to the idea that the nation's leaders would be the people who did well on tests*

**I**N the April, 1948, issue of a publication called *The Scientific Monthly* an article appeared under the title "The Measurement of Mental Systems (Can Intelligence Be Measured?)." The authors, W. Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, were well-known liberal educators; Davis had written a book about the plight of young Negroes in the South, called *Children of Bondage*, and was one of the first black professors ever to get a job at a white university; Havighurst had recently worked as a consultant to the president of Harvard, James Bryant Conant. The authors believed that intelligence tests were a fraud—a way of wrapping the fortunate children of the middle and upper-middle classes in a mantle of scientifically demonstrated superiority. The article considerably troubled Henry Chauncey, the head of the fledgling Educational Testing Service.

Even in 1948 the debate over IQ tests, which were not yet fifty years old, had an eternal quality. The leading intelligence-testing researchers tended to be true believers who thought they had found a way to measure the one essential human ability—what the British psychometrician Charles Spearman, in a famous 1904 article, called "the general factor," or *g*. Most psychometricians considered intelligence to be a substantially inherited, biologically grounded trait.

The overall results of intelligence tests have always produced a kind of photograph of the existing class structure, in which the better-off economic and ethnic groups are found to be more intelligent and the worse-off are found to be less so. In his book analyzing the results of the intelligence tests that the Army had given recruits during the First World War, for example, Carl Brigham, an early psychometrician and the father of ETS's leading test, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, reported that the highest-scoring identifiable group was Princeton students—this at a time when, by to-

day's standards, Princeton was a den of carousing rich boys.

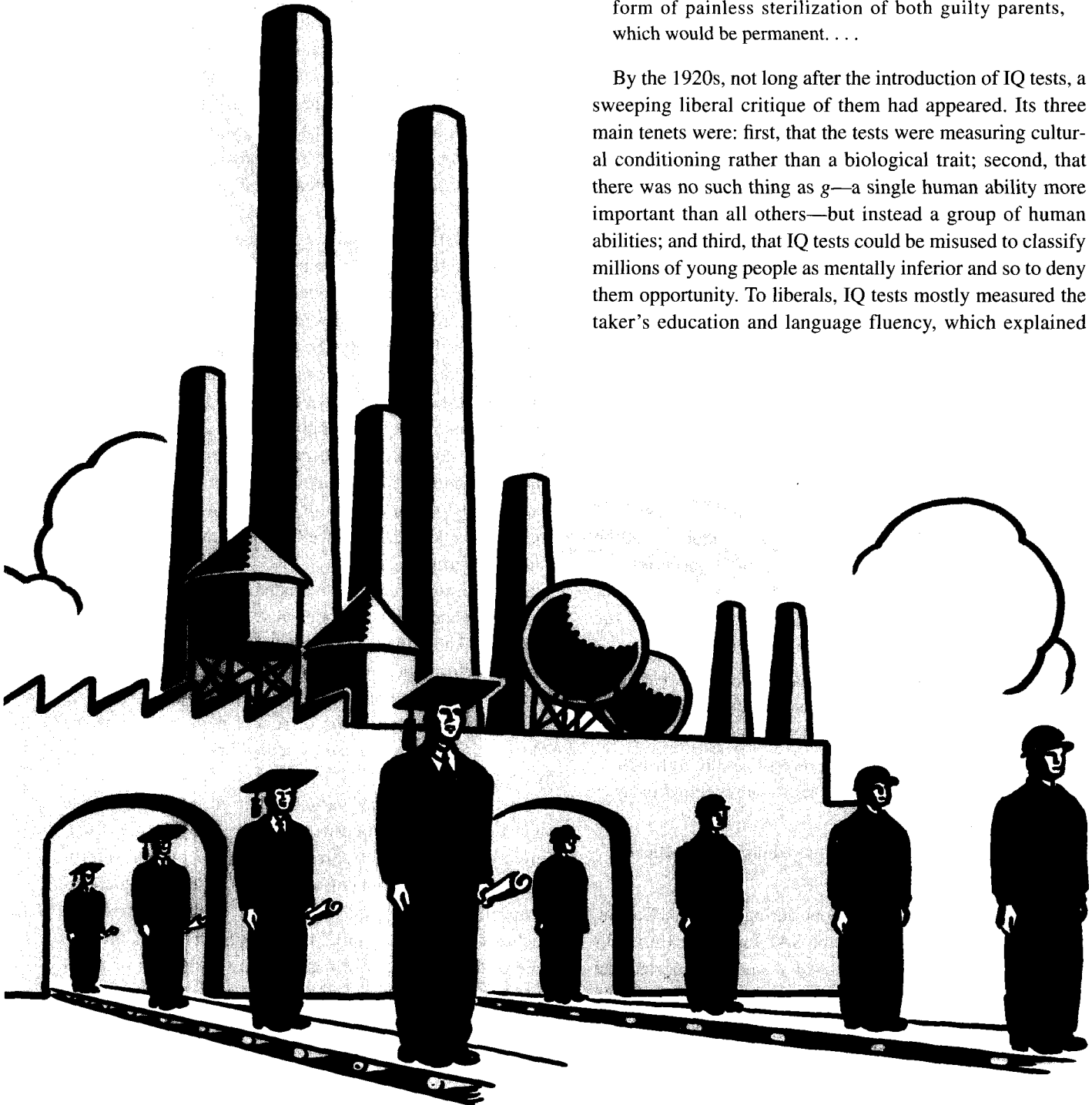
One of the main findings of American intelligence testing in Brigham's day was that immigrants were less intelligent than native-born Americans, with the most recent crop of immigrants being the least intelligent ever. The highest-scoring group today is Jews, but in 1923, when most American Jews were recent immigrants, Brigham reported that "our figures . . . would rather tend to disprove the popular belief that the Jew is highly intelligent. . . ." Aggregate IQ-test results have always been held up as proof of the innate mental superiority of some ethnic groups over others; among the *g* men, eugenicist policies like stringent immigration restrictions and measures to discourage reproduction among



people with low IQ scores have long found advocates. A taste of this view, in an especially ill-tempered form, can be had from a letter that Ben Wood, another founding father of testing and by then a crotchety old man, wrote in 1972 to someone at the Educational Testing Service:

It may be said in all soberness that professional “reliefers” and most other indigents who produce children thereby commit crimes against humanity which are fully as serious as many acts now considered felonies. They have no moral right to produce such children, and therefore should have no legal right to immunity from punishment that constructively “fits the crime,” such as some form of painless sterilization of both guilty parents, which would be permanent. . . .

By the 1920s, not long after the introduction of IQ tests, a sweeping liberal critique of them had appeared. Its three main tenets were: first, that the tests were measuring cultural conditioning rather than a biological trait; second, that there was no such thing as *g*—a single human ability more important than all others—but instead a group of human abilities; and third, that IQ tests could be misused to classify millions of young people as mentally inferior and so to deny them opportunity. To liberals, IQ tests mostly measured the taker’s education and language fluency, which explained





why poor people and immigrants tended to score so low.

Not all critics of the idea that intelligence is inherited and immutable were psychometrically illiterate save-the-world types. As Stephen Jay Gould pointed out in *The Mismeasure of Man*, several of the fathers of intelligence testing, including Lewis Terman, H. H. Goddard, Carl Brigham, and even Charles Spearman, backed away from their *g* enthusiasm over time. Brigham, especially, became a vituperative critic of *g*. From the standpoint of ETS, perhaps the most important of the *g* critics was Louis Leon Thurstone, of the University of Chicago. A former assistant to Thomas Edison and a founder of the Psychometric Society and the journal *Psychometrika*, Thurstone was so austere dedicated to his work that he had a blackboard mounted in his house so that he could conduct seminars. Thurstone believed that human intelligence consisted of several distinct factors rather than any single one, and he helped to develop a technique called factor analysis that would enable this truth to be expressed statistically.

But at the time of the founding of ETS, in 1948, the IQ debate was dormant. IQ testing had been a major public issue in the early 1920s and would later become one again, but for some time there had been no great controversy about it. Congress passed laws severely restricting immigration in 1921 and 1924, with the result that people stopped worrying that the country was being flooded by the mentally inferior. During the Depression perhaps a third of all Americans were poor—it was difficult to chalk up to feeble-mindedness the difficulties of so many people. And Adolf Hitler's embrace of eugenics put the movement in a bad light.

Because IQ was not an issue in the late 1940s, a curious situation obtained: the father of the SAT, Brigham, was on record as believing that there was no such thing as general intelligence, but the main promoters of the wide use of the SAT regarded it rather casually as an intelligence test. In 1937 Henry Chauncey, then an assistant dean at Harvard engaged in persuading the Ivy League schools to adopt the SAT as a scholarship test, made the following notes:

- 1) Much less in the way of factual or formal learning is now felt to be necessary for the successful carrying on of college work than was expected a generation ago.
- 2) Possibly more intellectual powers—ability to handle problems in a chosen field of study—are required today than formerly.
- 3) Intelligence tests are an aid to admissions practically unknown a generation ago.

As Chauncey remembers it now, during the 1940s Conant, who had long since approved the SAT for use in Harvard's national scholarship program, used to say he suspected that the SAT was actually an achievement test. Chauncey would argue back that it measured a combination of innate and learned qualities. It was clear to Chauncey that the more Conant thought that the SAT measured native intelligence, the happier he would be with it.

## UNCOMFORTABLY SIMILAR TESTS

**B**UT now here was the article in *The Scientific Monthly*, attacking intelligence tests for measuring only “a very narrow range of mental activities” and for being “a strong cultural handicap for pupils of the lower socioeconomic groups.” Without mentioning the SAT specifically, the article treated academic-aptitude and IQ tests as closely related—which, in fact, they were and still are. IQ tests have always heavily stressed reading comprehension and vocabulary items like analogies and antonyms, and so does the verbal section of the SAT. Back in the early days Carl Brigham published a scale for converting intelligence-test scores to SAT scores. Paul Diederich, a contemporary of Henry Chauncey's who was for decades a researcher at ETS, expresses a view common in the field: “IQ tests are reading comprehension and vocabulary doctored up to look like reasoning. To change the SAT to an IQ you'd simply divide the score by an age measure. Basically they're the same thing.”

The similarity between IQ and academic-aptitude tests can be explained in part through the testing concept called validation. Even if a test produces a reliable score—that is, one that changes little between administrations—it isn't much good unless it can be shown to predict something. Validation is a comparison of the test score with some other outcome. IQ testers have always thought that IQ scores are a good predictor of overall individual success and achievement, but historically it has been difficult to validate IQ convincingly against much besides performance in school. (To make a very long story short, IQ scores tend to be somewhat predictive of job performance but much more predictive of school performance.)

By definition, of course, an academic-aptitude test like the SAT is validated against grades in school. To the extent that IQ testers know that their work will be validated against school performance, they construct their tests to predict school performance as accurately as possible. The SAT is constructed with prediction of school performance as the sole goal. All tests validated by school grades will necessarily be quite similar.

The *Scientific Monthly* article attacked intelligence tests on just these grounds: because they measure primarily “academic or linguistic activities” rather than general intelligence, the use of school performance to validate IQ scores is “circular.” The validation is too similar to the test itself. “A teacher's rating of a pupil,” the authors wrote, “is an estimate of the pupil's performance on the same kind of problems as those in the standard tests.”

Davis and Havighurst represented the left-wing position in midcentury psychometrics: for example, they treated IQ as being much more the product of learning and culture than inheritance. But there were plenty of leading and not partic-

ularly left-wing psychometricians who, for reasons similar to theirs, had reservations about the use of aptitude testing to sort students. Besides Thurstone there were, for example, Ralph Tyler, of the University of Chicago, and E. F. Lindquist, of the University of Iowa, both giants in the field. In the early days of ETS, Henry Chauncey offered both Tyler and Lindquist jobs, but each man, perhaps unwilling to leave academe, turned him down and went on to become a thorn in the side of ETS. In the late 1950s Lindquist founded the American College Testing Program; the company is today ETS's chief competitor in the college-admissions field.

The last thing Henry Chauncey needed in 1948, with ETS a shaky newborn calf, was for the IQ controversy to break out again. So, although he was not generally a defensive person, he reacted a little touchily to the *Scientific Monthly* article. "They take the extreme and, I believe, radical point of view that any test items showing different difficulties for different socio-economic groups are inappropriate," he wrote in his notebook, and went on to take a mildly hereditarian position on intelligence tests.

If ability has any relation to success in life parents in upper socio-economic groups should have more ability than those in low socio-economic groups. And if there is anything in heredity (such as tall parents having tall children) one would expect children of high socio-economic group parents to have more ability than children of low socio-economic group parents.

Chauncey was also a liberal, and conciliatory by nature, so he was eager to incorporate the more practicable of Davis and Havighurst's ideas into the operations of ETS. Like many liberal critics of testing over the years, Davis and Havighurst shared with the believers in *g* an orderly social-scientific mind-set. They believed that the problems they perceived in testing were best addressed not by de-emphasizing testing and letting society sort itself out in a more haphazard fashion but by constructing tests that were free of cultural bias.

The culture-free test on which the poor will get high scores has proved to be a chimera, for the obvious reason that educational tests measure a comfortableness in the classroom that usually doesn't go with growing up in difficult circumstances. But in 1948 Henry Chauncey, with his limitless belief in testing, naturally liked the idea of his organization's improving its tests. For example, new items might be developed that would be fairer to all groups. Chauncey thought that he was already well on the way to answering Davis and Havighurst's central accusation—that tests were too narrowly focused on academic ability—by having ETS develop new tests to measure other abilities, using different validating procedures. Aptitude testing was only a phase, beyond which the field, now entering its great era, would surely move. The point was not to drop aptitude testing but to add to it.

ETS therefore wound up in an odd position with respect to intelligence testing. Within the organization and its ambit there have always been pockets of belief in *g* as an inherited trait. Chauncey's extremely conscientious No. 2 man, William Turnbull, though not a *g* man, confessed in a 1963 memo to Chauncey that he harbored a "long-held conviction that 'native intelligence' has some point to it." But officially ETS has always been opposed to IQ testing and to the concept of general intelligence. (Only last year ETS's usually mild-mannered president, Nancy Cole, wrote a blistering attack in the organization's in-house newspaper on the latest manifestation of the *g* theory, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve*.) The quality the SAT was measuring was "developed ability"—not intelligence.

ETS's research department, the topflight group of psychometricians whose ability to work at the frontiers of testing was the rationale for creating a large nonprofit testing agency like ETS in the first place, pointedly did not settle any of the controversies about intelligence testing, such as whether IQ is something innate or learned. Instead its bread and butter was tightly looped validations of the SAT, beginning with a 1948 study called "The Prediction of First-Term Grades at Hamilton College." These studies would produce a basic correlation coefficient between SAT scores and the grades of college freshmen. In the case of Hamilton College, for example, it was .30 for the verbal score and .27 for the math score. This meant that each score could predict about a tenth of the vari-



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ance in grades among freshmen. If you combined high school grades and SATs into a single number—an exercise Henry Chauncey had helped to invent back in the 1930s, in his assistant-dean days at Harvard—you got a correlation with freshman grades of more than .50. The SAT, then, was an instrument that would add a few percentage points to the ability of the high school transcript to predict grades in the freshman year of college (the correlation between SAT scores and grades dropped off after the freshman year). That was a very long way from *g*.

The trouble with ETS's neat public distinction between developed ability and IQ is that because of the similarity in content between the tests, the correlation between SAT scores and IQ is very high. Arthur Kroll, an ETS official who has worked on the SAT, estimates that the correlation between the verbal score and IQ is .60 to .80—that is, much, much higher than the correlation between SATs and freshman grades. The correlation is rumored in *g* circles to be even higher than that. A sociologist named Steven Goldberg, in a 1991 book, wrote, "One can not but be impressed by the astonishing correlation of SAT scores and scores on the standard IQ tests, a correlation about as high a nontrivial correlation as one ever finds in the social sciences." But he didn't cite a source; finding a published study of the correlation is well-nigh impossible. (*The Bell Curve* also mentions the correlation; the source listed for it in the footnotes is a College Board publication that contains many statistics, but not that one.)

The similarity of the SAT to an IQ test can actually be seen as undercutting the *g* position. *G* is supposed to be immutable, but SAT scores vary demonstrably over time according to the degree of specific preparation for the test. If the same were shown to be true of IQ scores, then IQ would begin to look like a measure of developed ability rather than SAT scores looking like a measure of *g*. Those are merely matters of theory, though. Had ETS initially taken the position that the SAT is an IQ test, the result would have been the resurgence of the IQ debate, and the SAT would not have gone into widespread use. As ETS later discovered, in America there is a strong note of populist resentment against intelligence testing (only last year it helped to make the movie *Forrest Gump* a big hit), and the organization has usually managed not to excite it. With remarkable uniformity ETS's university clients, too, have artfully blurred the similarity between the SAT and an IQ test; a slipup such as was made last year when Francis Lawrence, the president of Rutgers University, said that few blacks have the "genetic, hereditary background" to get high SAT scores can tear a school apart. Distancing the SAT from IQ has been crucial to its success.

If, in fact, the SAT is an IQ test, then the ironic result of ETS's (sincere) insistence that it is not one has been to produce, in the postwar United States, the most thoroughly IQ-tested society in the world.

## THE CENSUS OF ABILITIES

CHAUNCEY contemplated the IQ issue as part of an intensive program of reading and thinking he undertook during the late 1940s. After long, complex negotiations, the tiny College Board testing office in Princeton had become the Educational Testing Service (which opened for business on January 1, 1948; Henry Chauncey, president), home of all the leading educational tests in America. In past years Chauncey had relied on others—chiefly Conant, his boss at Harvard—to provide the educational vision he had helped carry out. Now Chauncey was the head of his own organization and needed a vision of his own.

During the war the idea had come to Chauncey of administering a grand national battery of tests to all of American youth. It was the chance to do this that made leaving Harvard seem worthwhile to him, and as ETS got under way, he thought about his plan more and more. He called it the Census of Abilities.

Conant's main interest was in expanding higher education to the point that it would become a new American opportunity structure, to replace the vanished frontier. Every year testing would find the few hundred most promising youths, wherever they might be, and route them to schools like Harvard and Princeton. But this was only the first stage of Conant's plan. What he really wanted was to see the more democratic state universities expand to the point where they would set practically everybody on the path to success and the Ivy League would become nearly irrelevant.

Chauncey's idea for the Census of Abilities sprang from a deeper faith in testing and order. He wanted to test every American beginning in the ninth grade—and to test not just for educational potential but for every human quality. A typical list of what he wanted the Census of Abilities to cover, from an entry in his notebook in 1947, is this:

... personal qualities, some of which may be drive (energy), motivation (focuses of energy), conscientiousness, intellectual stamina . . . ability to get along with others. . . . interests, such as aesthetic, religious, abstract, social, economic, political, manipulative.

Finding standardized tests of persistence and of sense of humor were also long-standing interests of Chauncey's. He wanted ETS to be as good at testing the human personality as at testing academic potential. Although he was no intellectual and rarely read for pleasure, he drove himself to keep up on the psychological literature of the day, because it might give him useful ideas for the Census of Abilities. Everything that might contribute to testing interested him, from graphology (the study of handwriting) and somatotyping (the study of the relationship of body type to personality type) to the deepest of depth psychology.

Unlike his minister forebears, he was unable to believe





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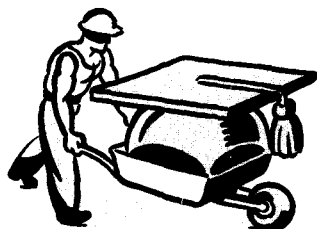


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that religion provides humanity with its mainspring, but he did want there to be some other mainspring—a core group of ennobling values that would raise people above the state of nature. Testing could somehow become part of a scientific substitute for religion, which would perform the social function historically assigned to the Church, only better. In his notes he kept returning to a twist he had invented on William James’s famous phrase “the moral equivalent of war”:



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“What I hope to see established is the moral equivalent of religion but based on reason and science rather than on sentiments and tradition.” The first step was to establish the Census of Abilities.

The ideal sponsor for the census, Chauncey had always thought, would be the federal government, with its reach and resources and high purpose. In May of 1948 he wrote out a prospectus for a “Census of the Abilities of the American People and Their Relation to Job Requirements,” presumably to be undertaken by ETS with the backing of an unspecified government agency. The prospectus was wildly ambitious, making the current activities of ETS, which were themselves very ambitious, appear puny by comparison. The government would first administer, through ETS, “a battery of perhaps twenty to fifty tests” (few of which had yet been constructed) to more than 100,000 people in the labor force. Then it would test the educational attainments of a million eighth- or ninth-graders. This would pave the way for a grand technological match-up between the nation’s human resources and its economic needs.

Chauncey received one expression of interest in the Census of Abilities from the Air Force and another from the Selective Service System, which drafted men into the armed services. Somehow he was able to parlay these nibbles into an appointment with W. Stuart Symington, the head of the National Security Resources Board and a protégé of President Harry Truman’s, who later became a U.S. senator from Missouri. Chauncey sent Symington a detailed proposal and then called on him on July 6, 1950. The meeting was a terrible disappointment, as recounted in notes Chauncey made the next day:

He was about fifteen minutes behind-hand on appointments but greeted me with apologies in a very friendly manner. He is a strikingly good-looking and pleasant person.

Hardly had I explained how I happened to be there than he, after one question on what I meant by human resources, suggested that I write him a letter stating what I had in mind. . . .

With that I bowed out, having taken about five minutes of his time and learned how top government executives operate.

That was the end of the Census of Abilities, at least as a founding project for ETS. It had a residue, however. The grandeur of purpose that Chauncey initially had in mind for ETS remained somehow attached to everything the organization did—even when the job at hand was mundane or ill conceived. Henry Chauncey was always certain that he was doing what his minister father called the Lord’s work. Although the Census of Abilities failed to materialize, ETS went forward with the full, almost messianic sense of mission that had been generated in Chauncey’s mind. Instead of an all-encompassing Census of Abilities, what ETS wound up conducting, with consequences for Americans that were just as large but with none of the breadth of Chauncey’s idea, was a national census of just one ability: the ability to get good grades in school.

## IQ JOE

THE first couple of years were financially rocky for ETS. Its signature product, the SAT, was an admissions requirement for College Board schools, but the membership of the College Board itself was still small. The now-familiar graduate school tests, all offered by ETS in its early years—the Graduate Record Examinations, the Medical College Admissions Test, the Law School Admissions Test, and the Graduate Management Admissions Test—were either brand-new or still in development. Henry Chauncey was certain that ETS could become a nationwide mass administrator of educational tests within a few years; he was constantly pushing to expand the organization. ETS’s first branch office was all the way across the country, in Berkeley, California. But Chauncey, a practical man, realized that the federal government was potentially the biggest single customer for testing. With one contract the government

could provide the kind of business that it would take years to build up in academia. In a March, 1950, letter to his counselor on financial matters, a Harvard Business School professor named Robert Merry, he wrote.

Incidentally, there are a number of activities in the air which, if they should materialize, would quite substantially change the picture, namely, a scholarship program in the National Science Foundation Bill, a Federal scholarship program, and classification testing for Selective Service.

The first of these possibilities was the closest to Chauncey's heart, because during the 1940s he had worked on the government commission that had recommended the creation of the National Science Foundation. But the last was the live prospect. The Selective Service System was run from 1941 until its abolition, nearly three decades later, by General Lewis B. Hershey. Hershey's artfully maintained persona was that of a country boy, a rumpled cracker-barrel philosopher; he spoke often of his humble upbringing, by a nearly illiterate father in rural Indiana, and he liked to deliver lengthy homespun discourses that rambled from military issues to the nature of farm life and back again. As his tenure demonstrates, Hershey was an extremely adept bureaucrat; and, appearances to the contrary, he was also a fan of intelligence testing.

Once the Cold War began in earnest, with the establishment of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, there was concern, even alarm, in official circles about the way America deployed its human resources. Many of the scientists who had worked on the development of the atomic bomb were European refugees, and thus not products of the American education system. In the future, the argument went, we were unlikely to be so lucky in our ability to import top scientific talent, and we would have to develop our own. But Ph.D. programs in physics and the other hard sciences were underfunded and underenrolled. Elementary and secondary education were controlled by thousands of local school boards with widely varying policies, whereas the Soviet system—at least as Americans then imagined it—worked with ruthless efficiency to identify and nurture people who might as adults lend special abilities to the national struggle. Because of the Cold War, the United States now needed urgently to do two things it had never done: maintain a large standing army in peacetime and create a system for developing talent, especially in scientific fields with potential military applications.

At the forefront of the leaders who wanted to steer the nation toward these goals was Henry Chauncey's mentor, James Bryant Conant. Conant took the Soviet threat extremely seriously; he thought that beyond the danger that the United States might fall behind scientifically, the country's basic social cohesion was at risk. Any country that did not provide some opportunity to all would be ripe for a turn to Marxism—even the United States. Conant wanted to see an expansion of higher education not just as a mechanism for producing a new technocratic elite but also as a way of ex-

panding opportunity and thereby making the country stronger and more united. Universities would provide both elite selection *and* mass opportunity.

In the late 1940s Conant became one of the country's leading proponents of universal military training. If every young man had to fulfill some obligation to his country, he thought, it would generate a democratic, classless, burden-sharing spirit that would be both good on its own terms and a bulwark against communism. President Truman was also a supporter of universal military training. When Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1948, which required universal draft registration but not universal training, it was a loss for Truman and a blow to Conant.

Among Hershey's first moves after the passage of the act was setting up a series of six scientific advisory committees to the Selective Service System. Henry Chauncey was a member of one of them. Although the committees didn't issue a public report until the end of 1950, the direction in which they were moving soon became clear to people on the inside: they would be recommending a draft deferment for college students who did well on an aptitude test.

This was the antithesis of Conant's vision, but it had its own Cold War rationale. Future scientists—those most precious of military resources—shouldn't have their training interrupted. They would be deferred, not exempted, from the draft; the implication was that by the time they did serve, their potential would be so clearly defined that they would not be put at personal risk in combat.

There was, of course, a long-standing military tradition of having people with specialized skills, such as doctors, serve in the area of their expertise rather than as infantry soldiers. But this was different. Despite the committees' rhetorical emphasis on scientists, the real idea was to defer a whole class of people—those high in aptitude, no matter what their field. As Chauncey wrote in a memo about a talk by Hershey in January of 1949, people would be "deferred, not for a specific responsibility, so much as for their potential worth."

Hershey, who did not at the outset grasp the fine distinctions in testing, originally wanted to make an IQ test the basis for the deferment and to administer it only to college students. This was just seven years after Conant, in this magazine, had angrily described college attendance as purely a function of parental income. And Hershey wanted to make students who took the test pay for it out of their own pockets. As if to overcome Chauncey's potential objections, Hershey told him early on that he planned to recommend that a single testing agency be designated to conduct the broad-scale testing for the deferment program. In 1949 there was only one candidate—ETS.

The situation had all the makings of an exquisite moral dilemma for Henry Chauncey. One can imagine him spending long nights agonizing over the conflict between the clear interest of his organization in the deferment program and his wish to avoid either the abandonment of the liberal democra-



tic vision that he and Conant shared or a direct clash with Conant, who was the first chairman of the board of ETS. But Chauncey was not one for exquisite moral dilemmas. He was the head of ETS. The key to his behavior was his belief that his organization was good and that what was in its best interests was good for America and even for humanity. He and Conant began with similar premises about the importance of the Cold War and the need to change traditional ways of doing things. It was difficult for Chauncey to imagine that a major testing program could have a bad result, even though its aim was to create the kind of student deferments that Conant feared would promote social divisions—and added to this faith in testing was his institutional ambition for ETS. America did need to manage its human resources in a more orderly way, especially in this unsettled time.

In June of 1950 the Korean War began. Hershey's advisory committees, which hadn't done much for a year, quickly reconvened. By October they had produced a preliminary report that specifically recommended ETS as the agency to conduct draft-deferment testing. In December the commit-

tees issued the final, public version of the report, written in the lurid language of crisis. "We, the citizens of the United States now face the greatest test in the history of the Nation," it began. The committees anticipated and tried to answer the arguments against a deferment exam. To subject all college students to the draft "would virtually stop the production of superior scientific, professional and specialized personnel." It was important to exempt students in all disciplines, not just those on a brief list of militarily essential fields, because "to prepare such a list calls for an omniscience which sane men hesitate to claim." The committees acknowledged that the college population was not democratically selected or representative of all classes. But an "unwise manpower and Selective Service policy" should not be put in place because of an "inadequate national policy with regard to the distribution of educational opportunity."

Just as the report was coming out, Conant announced the formation of the Committee on the Present Danger, an organization of eminent members of the establishment concerned about the Cold War. Conant's committee was ardently in fa-

## A DISPLAY OF MACKEREL

They lie in parallel rows,  
on ice, head to tail,  
each a foot of luminosity

barred with black bands,  
which divide the scales'  
radiant sections

like seams of lead  
in a Tiffany window.  
Iridescent, watery

prismatics: think abalone,  
the wildly rainbowed  
mirror of a soap-bubble sphere,

think sun on gasoline.  
Splendor, and splendor,  
and not a one in any way

distinguished from the other  
—nothing about them  
of individuality. Instead

they're all exact expressions  
of the one soul,  
each a perfect fulfillment

of heaven's template,  
mackerel essence. As if,  
after a lifetime arriving

at this enameling, the jeweler's  
made uncountable examples  
each as intricate

in its oily fabulation  
as the one before;  
a cosmos of champlévé.

Suppose we could iridesce,  
like these, and lose ourselves  
entirely in the universe

of shimmer—would you want  
to be yourself only,  
unduplicatable, doomed

to be lost? They'd prefer,  
plainly, to be flashing participants,  
multitudinous. Even on ice

they seem to be bolting  
forward, heedless of stasis.  
They don't care they're dead

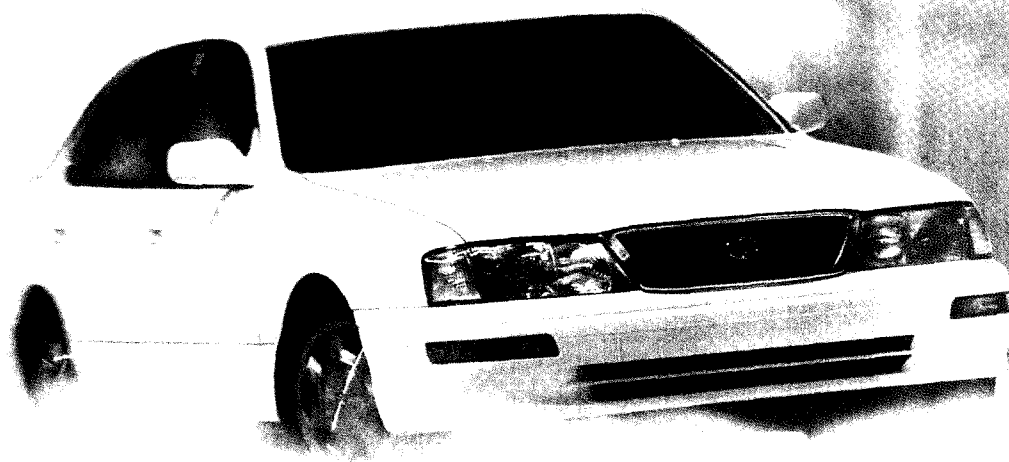
and nearly frozen,  
just as, presumably,  
they didn't care that they were living:

all, all for all,  
the rainbowed school  
and its acres of brilliant classrooms,

in which no verb is singular,  
or every one is. How happy they seem,  
even on ice, to be together, selfless,

which is the price of gleaming.

—MARK DOTY



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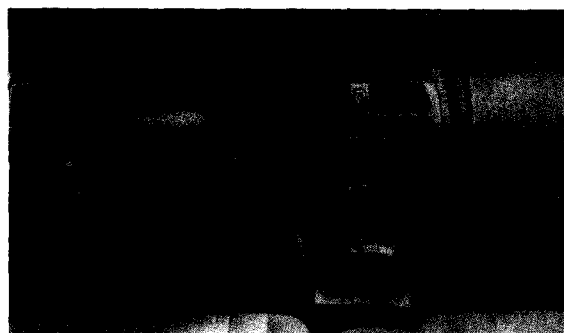
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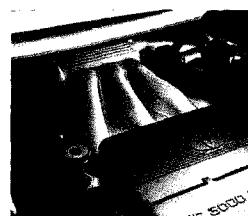
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vor of universal military service—not just training—and opposed to the draft-deferment test for college students. On March 19, 1951, the Selective Service System signed a contract with ETS, and on March 31 Truman signed an executive order authorizing the test. The great trial by fire of Chauncey's life began.

## ETS ARRIVES

**E**TS first of all had to do the logistical work involved in a mass test administration: construct the test, print it under secure conditions, and line up testing sites. Because of the judgment-of-God importance of the test, the large number of takers, and the demands of the military, all of this was unusually difficult. Chauncey requested the help of the FBI in maintaining test security, and he made plans for the test takers to be fingerprinted at the sites. The test itself was to be based on the SAT, but the Selective Service wanted it to be scored—or, in testing language, “scaled”—in such a way that the results could be compared with those of the Army General Classification Test given to inductees, a more nakedly IQ-like test.

In the days preceding Truman's executive order Hershey publicly referred to the deferment test as an IQ test. Chauncey quickly put a stop to that, and also persuaded Hershey that the Selective Service should not charge the test-takers a fee. “The test should not be looked upon or referred to as an ‘intelligence test,’” he wrote Hershey. “There are many kinds of intelligence; the ability revealed by this test is more properly called ‘scholastic aptitude.’ This means nothing more than the ability to do well in school or college.” The same could be said about IQ tests themselves: during the Second World War 80 percent of college students, then thought to be a notoriously unmeritocratic group, had scored at or above 120 on the Army General Classification Test, as against 16 percent of all recruits. For the purpose of administering the deferment test smoothly, though, there was no need to question the concept of IQ. The point was to stress the distinction between it and scholastic aptitude. Thus the test was scaled so as to produce a score that wouldn't read like an IQ score: the scale was zero to 99, the mean was 50, and the “cutting score” at which a student would be deferred was 70, equivalent to an IQ of 120.

As soon as Truman signed the executive order, an immense outcry against the deferment test began. The editorial cartoonist for the *Sacramento Bee* showed Joe Stalin walking into his propaganda department with a self-satisfied grin, holding a piece of paper that said PRESIDENT TRUMAN ADVOCATES DRAFT DEFERMENT FOR COLLEGE BOYS—U.S. TO INITIATE CASTE SYSTEM. The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* cartoon showed THE AVERAGE GUY standing looking at JOE COLLEGE up on a pedestal that was labeled SUPER-CITIZEN FAR AND ABOVE THE CRASS AND SORDID DEFENSE OF COUNTRY. The local draft board in Beaver County, Oregon,

resigned in protest. The draft board in Grand Rapids, Michigan, refused to issue deferments on the basis of test results. The president of Princeton attacked the idea, and so did America's most famous university educator, Robert Maynard Hutchins, a former chancellor of the University of Chicago. Conant submitted to a radio interview with a fellow member of the Committee on the Present Danger, Edward R. Murrow, of CBS, who got him to agree on the air that draft-deferment testing “stinks.” The IQ-testing movement had been dogged from the very beginning by the charge that people high in IQ were prone to be intelligent misfits, scrawny, nearsighted, and weird; several commentators now revived this line of argument, saying that the test would be selecting and rewarding people like America's two leading domestic villains of the day, the brainy traitors Klaus Fuchs and Alger Hiss.

Henry Chauncey had previously demonstrated that he was a gifted administrator who could organize the complicated technical and logistical aspects of mass testing. But he had not been a public figure—that had always been Conant's role. Now, with Conant on the other side and the unpolished Hershey prone to excessive frankness, Chauncey had to rush in to defend the test. Through the spring and summer of 1951 he was constantly speaking, conferring, and being quoted. Over and over he patiently and reasonably explained that the test was for draft deferment, not exemption; that making a score of 70 didn't mean a man had an IQ of 70; that people in the top half of their college classes would be deferred no matter what their test scores were; that the nation desperately needed to keep the pipeline of scientific talent flowing. When someone prominent criticized the test, Chauncey would never lose his temper. He would generally seek to meet with the person and explain his position—ideally in Princeton, so that the meeting could be combined with a tour of ETS's operations and followed by a dinner at the Chauncey home or at a charming inn in the nearby countryside of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Even Conant, whose criticism Chauncey considered “unnecessarily violent,” was quickly on good terms again with Chauncey.

The controversy over the test began to die down. Chauncey's efforts were no doubt part of the reason. Another part was that even if Conant had lined up most of the leaders of elite higher education against the idea of creating a new intellectual elite with a military deferment, mass higher education, as represented by the American Council on Education, staunchly supported the test. The state universities were just beginning two decades of remarkable growth, which would have been threatened by an exodus of students into the Armed Forces. The situation was ironic. When ETS was beginning, Conant had insisted on bringing in the American Council on Education and its tests, because mass higher education was so important to him. Chauncey had been unenthusiastic about the idea. Now the council, acting as a big, muscular education-interest group, was Chauncey's essential ally, without whose support the draft-deferment test



# HOW I GOT HERE - ROLL CREDITS:

Roxie Theatre, aisle seat,  
every Saturday.

Wrote Oscar acceptance  
speech, age 8.

"The Godfather I and II,"  
18 times.

"The Godfather III," once.

Student Loan,  
First Interstate Bank.

ROBYN LATTAKER, FILM  
STUDENT, ART CENTER  
COLLEGE OF DESIGN.

YOU & 

**First Interstate** Bank

might have languished. Whether or not the state universities provided opportunity to all, as Conant wished them to, they certainly provided ETS with institutional strength.

After the first test administrations, in the spring and summer of 1951, went off smoothly, the tone of press coverage changed, perhaps because ETS had hired its first public-relations consultant. There was less emphasis on the idea that the test was introducing a class division between, as one cartoonist put it, GI Joe and IQ Joe, and more on the wonders of testing



AN IRONY OF  
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OUT-OF-TOUCH,  
UNDEMOCRATIC  
IN-GROUP.

ing and its importance as a tool in the Cold War. In the gee-whiz tone characteristic of coverage of industrial technology during the 1950s, the stories often discussed the use of IBM's scoring machine to do the grading.

About two thirds of the college students who took the test, in those days of minimally selective admissions, scored at or above the cutting score of 70 and so were deferred from the draft. In 1951 there was no interest, inside or outside ETS, in what would today be the main question about the test results—score differences between ethnic groups—and no women took the test. To ETS executives what leaped out from the results was the substantial regional differences in the pass rates: 73 percent of college students in New England made a 70 or above, but only 42 percent in the Deep South did. The other main finding was that education majors scored far below students in every other field of study. Fortunately for ETS, neither the South nor schools of education went on the attack against the test. The main residue of the test results was to leave Chauncey convinced that be-

cause the quality of the people who became teachers was so low, the best way to improve American schools would be to invent machines that could teach—an interest he pursued for decades, in the characteristic hope that science could correct human frailty.

The terms of the contract between ETS and the Selective Service were unusually favorable to ETS. Because of this, and because the testing went so smoothly, ETS made a wind-fall profit on the contract: about \$900,000, an amount just below half of what the organization's annual revenues had been in each of the preceding years. This money instantly solved ETS's financial difficulties and allowed it both to continue its research on new tests and to expand its reach across the landscape of American education.

ETS had arrived, and not only financially. Everyone now knew that it was the scientifically impeccable, public-spirited nonprofit research organization that dominated testing in America, and everyone in higher education, at least, knew that Henry Chauncey was the statesman-technocrat who so ably ran it and spoke for the interests of testing in general. All the potentially most dangerous issues for ETS came up during the draft-deferment-test controversy, and they proved not to be crippling: the idea of sorting vast numbers of Americans, rather than just a few applicants to Ivy League colleges, on the basis of multiple-choice aptitude tests; the idea of a new national elite of the brainy; and the idea that a public function as important as mass testing could be performed by a private organization, rather than by government. If such matters had only a limited charge when the tests were being used to help decide who would be sent into battle, then they would most likely be even less nettlesome when the purpose of the tests was merely to aid admissions officers.

After the first year of administrations of the draft test, during a long meeting with Chauncey to discuss the future, Hershey said that he wanted to carry the principle behind the test further than he would have dared before Chauncey's adept handling of the controversy. He told Chauncey that he was making provisional plans to eliminate the deferment for fathers, which had been sacrosanct even during the Second World War, in order to make more room on the deferment lists for the intellectually gifted.

The issue never came to a head, because the number of combat troops in Korea, and hence the need for inductions, was by then rapidly decreasing. What is remarkable is how completely Hershey believed that in the atomic age there was a need to keep potential scientists out of the line of fire—a need so pressing that it necessitated abandoning all previous American ideas about who should bear the burden of service in wartime. Once a principle is established, it quickly takes on the trappings of tradition, and also generates a constituency—in this case consisting of universities and the broad upper-middle class from which most of their students came. That may help explain why there was barely any controversy during the Vietnam War over the deferment

of college students and graduate students—even though, unlike 1951, it was a time of dissent—or later over the abolition of the draft in favor of a voluntary military, which meant that for the college-going class there would be no obligation to serve at all.

When ETS's contract with the Selective Service System came up for renewal, in 1954, a testing company on the way to becoming its arch-rival, Science Research Associates of Chicago, submitted a lower competing bid and won the job. The news came as a shock to Chauncey—SRA was a private business out to make money, not to serve the public!—but he quickly recovered and went to Washington to see General Hershey. “I explained that I just wanted to drop in and tell him how much we had enjoyed working with Selective Service on the draft deferment program and that I understood the reason for accepting a lower bid,” Chauncey wrote in his notes of the meeting. “I went on to say that we were anxious to make the transition as smooth as possible.” Chauncey's good sportsmanship paid off: ETS got the contract back five years later. In any case, SRA, because of its low bid, made much less money from the draft test than ETS did. The Selective Service contract had gotten ETS over its initial difficulties, and now it was in a position to ride the expansion of higher education.

## AMERICA'S PERSONNEL OFFICE

**I**N 1951 there were 2.1 million Americans enrolled in institutions of higher learning, in 1956 nearly 3 million, in 1961 more than 4 million, and in 1970, the year Henry Chauncey retired from the presidency of ETS, 8.6 million. This growth was unmatched in any other country in the world, and it made higher education into something it had never been before—the personnel office for white-collar America. The country's booming corporations began to require a college degree as a prerequisite for white-collar employment. The politics of expanding higher education was wonderful. Governors and legislators, and later the federal government, were able to deliver to middle-class constituents a much appreciated and at the time usually inexpensive benefit. Architects, engineers, and contractors (who often contribute generously to political campaigns) got work in enormous university-building projects in every state. As educational aspirations spread and universities sought to regulate the flood of people entering their gates, ETS grew too. University faculties had increased to the point that America had a real academic class for the first time in its history—a class that generally supported the widespread use of standardized testing. Because the tests were financed by the fees takers paid, they cost ETS's customers nothing. And using them provided an objective explanation for tough decisions and obviated the need for administratively disruptive mass flunk-outs. In 1960 Chauncey's many years of lobbying in

Berkeley finally paid off: the University of California system began requiring applicants to take the SAT, and thus was on its way to becoming ETS's single largest client by far. Annual administrations of the SAT passed one million in 1963–1964 and were 1.8 million in 1994–1995.

In retrospect what is striking about the expansion of higher education, and the concomitant reordering of a good portion of American society, is how sketchy the rationale for it was. Perhaps, like most transforming social changes, it just happened, rather than being planned. Although the passage of the GI Bill of Rights, toward the end of the Second World War, is now remembered as a national commitment to provide a college education as a kind of franchise of citizenship, the bill was conceived as a temporary and fairly standard government reward and readjustment effort for veterans, and education was not thought of as its most important component. The argument made during the 1940s and 1950s for a change in national policy toward higher education was essentially the same argument about the need for Cold War scientists and administrators that was used to justify the Korean War draft test. The bill that finally established the practice of large-scale federal aid to education, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, was passed soon after the launching of *Sputnik*.

It quickly became clear that the supply of new scientists was coming from schools that specialized in science; Hershey's idea that if the generally able were sought out, nurtured, and protected, they would wind up using their abilities in a national-security-enhancing manner turned out not to be true. A study done at the time of the passage of the National Defense Education Act, for example, showed that only one Ivy League school—Cornell—was even in the top fifty in the production of scientists. What the new national elite did with their lives, in the main, was go into law, medicine, finance, and liberal-arts scholarship—what Ivy League graduates had done for decades. In 1991, upon his retirement as president of Harvard, Derek Bok wrote a book complaining that graduates of elite colleges could not be induced to pursue careers in public service. Conant's vision for Harvard and places like it has been substantially realized in the intake, but not in the outflow.

## THE GOLDEN AGE

**T**HIS didn't matter at all for any of the players in higher education, including ETS. In the years following the first administrations of the draft-deferment test Henry Chauncey's life and that of his institution entered a golden period. Chauncey's marriage had long resembled a miniature Cold War; he and his wife, Elizabeth, lived essentially separate lives under the same roof, raising their three sons and one daughter. Elizabeth had no interest in the ceaseless activities that went along with being a chief executive's spouse. In the spring of 1953 she told Chauncey she wanted a divorce. Those were the days when only a few



states had the lenient divorce laws that prevail now, so it was decided that Henry Chauncey would spend eight weeks over the summer living in Wyoming, where his Harvard roommate operated a dude ranch, and would obtain the divorce there. His friend put him to work doing jobs for the ranch, including picking up guests at the nearest airport. When he was on one such mission, a young woman from New York named Laurie Worcester, who had recently graduated from Smith College and was working at *Life* magazine, stepped off the plane. She and Chauncey, who was about twice her age, fell in love. In 1954, after they both visited a psychiatrist at the insistence of her parents, to make sure that she was not merely under the sway of a father fixation, they were married. Chauncey had a second set of four children, all girls.

In 1955 Chauncey persuaded ETS to buy a 340-acre farm a few miles outside Princeton, and ETS began constructing a landscaped campus-style headquarters, with the main buildings named for James Bryant Conant, Carl Brigham, Ben Wood, and L. L. Thurstone. The Chaunceys lived in the old farmhouse, in a setup quite like that of the president of a university and his wife. Laurie Chauncey took a special interest in the landscaping of the ETS campus. They entertained frequently; at the annual employee picnic Henry Chauncey would put on a chef's hat and cook the hamburgers. Some of the flavor of the Chaunceys' life can be gotten from a letter Laurie submitted to *Ladies Home Journal* in 1957 for a best-husband contest. "It's an objective fact that he is the most remarkable man alive," she wrote. "'Alive' is a pretty feeble word to use for the combination of vitality and humanity that is unique with Henry. . . ." (Laurie Chauncey died, of cancer, in 1975; Henry Chauncey, now aged ninety, lives in Shelburne, Vermont.)

During the 1950s and 1960s the College Board added hundreds of new member universities, many of which would send representatives to see firsthand the wonders of the ETS operation. Chauncey went on lengthy official visits to Australia and New Zealand and, three times, to the Soviet Union. ETS's competitors were in a near-constant state of agitation; after much urging by them, the Internal Revenue Service undertook an investigation of whether ETS really deserved to be a nonprofit institution, and so to pay no taxes. (ETS hired a former IRS commissioner as its special Washington counsel, and was able to retain its nonprofit status.) But after the initial outcry over the draft test there was only the barest hint of adverse public reaction to the spread of testing. When a critic would emerge, Henry Chauncey would usually right away invite him or her to visit ETS, and after they had talked, the criticism would at least take on a more muted and responsible tone.

Until 1957 the takers of the SAT were not even informed of their scores. Neither were their high schools. The test-prep industry consisted of a self-employed teacher named Stanley H. Kaplan who offered SAT tutoring (which ETS regularly assured the public was ineffectual) out of his moth-

er's basement, in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. The role of ETS in American society, though less pervasive than Chauncey had originally hoped it would be, nonetheless was considerable, and it was established with great speed and smoothness. ETS became the agent of what one College Board official liked to call "the Great Sorting," providing higher education with a national standard for measuring the scholastic aptitude of millions of people.

Chauncey certainly did not see himself as being involved in a social-engineering operation, a deliberate, if quiet, effort to remake American society. In 1992 Chauncey wrote Gregory Anrig, then the president of ETS, "I tend to be a little wary of people who use the word meritocracy." But he also wanted to feel that he was doing something grander than helping schools to improve their ability to predict the first-year grades of potential students. In 1961 *Time* magazine published an article on the twelve most outstanding college seniors in the country; after it appeared, Chauncey ordered up their SAT scores (something the president of ETS can't do anymore, because the scores are protected by a series of elaborate and ever-changing security measures) in order to satisfy himself that the SAT was predictive of real leadership as well as academic ability. Ten of the twelve did have high scores (Martin Feldstein, a future head of the Council of Economic Advisers, had a 723 verbal and a 759 math), and one of the two low scorers was an immigrant from Poland whose performance could be explained by his lack of enough language familiarity to score well on the verbal portion.

## TESTING'S MIXED RESULTS

CHAUNCEY'S own feelings notwithstanding, the great success of the SAT and other tests that selected people on the basis of their predicted grade-point averages achieved distinct social results. One was that the Episcopacy—the American elite that prevailed during the first half of the twentieth century—faded in importance. It had thought of itself as meritocratic, and its definition of merit involved nonintellectual qualities like character and leadership. Now many of the institutions it had dominated passed into the hands of people high in academic ability. Thanks to the Episcopacy's good sportsmanship (as always, this contained an element of self-interest: its members obtained far gentler treatment than displaced elites usually get), the power shift took place with remarkably little of the rancor that usually accompanies such things. Henry Chauncey gamely accepted the wait-listing of one of his daughters by Harvard College, whose second president had been a Chauncey.

Today the academically selected elite does not control America to nearly the extent that is commonly assumed. Business, either corporate or entrepreneurial, isn't really its territory, and neither is career government service or elective politics. (The exceptions in these areas are small patch-

# Why We Must Reduce Immigration From Over One Million to 100,000 a Year

## It Makes No Sense for Our Nation to Permit Massive Immigration

We now allow over one million immigrants to settle here every year. If our fertility rate remains at 2.0, continuing immigration at that rate would swell our population to nearly 500 million before the end of the next century. **That would almost double our present size!**

Such growth would be intolerable. It would destroy our environment, our standard of living and the quality of our lives.

With a present population of over 264 million, our country is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. Yet we continue to grow rapidly, by 25 to 30 million each decade.

## We Need to Halt and Then Reverse Our Population Growth

We at NPG believe that our goal should be to stabilize our U.S. population at no more than 150 million, its size back in 1950. We consider that to be the optimum size for our country.

However, we Americans do not have to agree now on the exact size of a smaller population, since any substantial reduction in numbers would take many decades to achieve. It is only essential that we agree on the urgent need to halt and reverse our population growth.

## Immigration Must Be Drastically Reduced

Because we have allowed our nation to become seriously overpopulated we are in deep trouble. A quick and easy solution simply does not exist. To start on the path toward a smaller, more sustainable population, we must halt illegal immigration and sharply reduce legal immigration.

Accordingly, NPG strongly recommends that legal immigration be cut back from its present 900,000 per year to no more than 100,000, including all relatives, refugees and asylees. We further call for an all-out effort to reduce illegal immigration, currently estimated at 300,000 a year, to as near zero as possible.

## Best Case Scenario: Low Fertility, Low Immigration

What would happen to our population if our fertility rate were gradually reduced from the present 2.0 to 1.5 by 2050, if illegal immigration were virtually halted, and if legal immigration were reduced in 1996 from the present 900,000 a year to 100,000 a year, as we advocate?

**The bad news** is that our population would still continue growing for another 25 years, peaking at 300 million in 2020.

**The good news** is that by the end of the next century it would have declined to around 180 million. In a few more decades it would reach 150 million and could be stabilized at that level, even allowing a slight increase in fertility and/or immigration.

**This is the path to a smaller population that NPG advocates.**

## Another Scenario: Low Fertility, High Immigration

If our fertility were reduced as in the "best case" scenario, but immigration remained at its present high level, the picture would be far worse.

1. Our population would continue growing for another 55 years, peaking in 2050 at 337 million, **75 million more than we are now**. Our impact on the environment would accordingly be that much greater.

2. Even by the end of the next century, our population would still be 298 million, 36 million greater than it is today, **and 121 million larger than it would be under the "best case" low immigration scenario.**

This is a path that our nation cannot afford to follow. **Clearly, the level of immigration will have a tremendous influence on the eventual size of our population.**

## We Cannot Rely on Fertility Decline Alone to Reverse Our Population Growth

Fertility rates are difficult to change and when they do change, they almost always do so very slowly. Furthermore, future fertility rates are unpredictable: they might well increase rather than decrease. Over the last 18 years, for example, the trend has been upward, from a low of 1.7 in 1976 to 2.0 in the last few years.

That is all the more reason why we must reduce immigration to a level consistent with our long-term national interest. Reducing immigration is a much faster and more certain way to get results than relying on fertility decline.

If we can persuade our government to act decisively **NOW** to halt illegal immigration — and to cut legal immigration from 900,000 to 100,000 a year — **we will at last be doing something** to brake runaway population growth in our country.

If you believe with us that immigration must be drastically curbed — and without further delay — then we ask you to work for this goal as a member of Negative Population Growth. We need your help.

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. and world population growth, write today for our **FREE BROCHURE**.

NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization founded in 1972. **We are the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and recommends specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

**Negative Population Growth, Inc.**

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es of ground that were formerly the domain of the Episcopacy and have now been turned over to high-test-score meritocrats: the career diplomatic service in government, and investment banking in business. Not coincidentally, in both cases ETS has been involved in the means of entry: the Foreign Service Examination and the admissions test for graduate business schools.) But in certain areas, mainly the professions, it does make up a recognizable class—brainy, isolated, coast-dwelling, culturally liberal, and economically less so. Its rise has coincided with the economy's increasing need for and rewarding of high levels of skill. Still, the particular skills that SATs and similar tests measure are most consistently found in those fields that use such tests to decide who will enter. Rather than being an inevitable product of the forces of economic history, the professional elite was *created*, in large part through the efforts of Chauncey, Conant, and their colleagues.

Just as important as, or more important than, the effect of the Great Sorting on the composition of the American elite has been its effect on everyone else. We have a different social order now. Henry Chauncey—who, when ETS was beginning, privately compared the situation in testing to that of railroads in the 1850s—helped to create the human equivalent of the standard gauge, which nationalized and systematized the mobility of people instead of goods. The railroad standard gauge created big business, and then economic concentration of power became controversial; mass educational testing gave America's long-standing obsession with opportunity an institutional structure, and then education and employment became controversial. Frustrated aspirations now have a target. It's no accident that the civil-rights and feminist movements, and their oppositions, have fought so many of their battles over the new system of rationalized admissions and employment. Many of the dozens of Supreme Court cases on civil rights over the past four decades have involved the issues of access to education and the proper use of test scores; the current controversy over affirmative action would not be taking place if there were no standardized tests. The most poignantly naive of the expectations of the founders of the system was that an ordering of American opportunity, if it was based on scientific principles, would be universally appreciated and would make the nation less contentious—would even provide it with a strong moral center.

Broad-scale testing in America was intended to be two things at once: a system for selecting an elite and a way of providing universal opportunity. The second purpose generates the public consent that supports the first. Controversy about one produces instability in the other. An irony of the American meritocracy, now that it has been in operation long enough to produce not just future leaders but present ones, is that the leaders chosen by a mechanism designed to be perfectly open and fair are widely regarded as a pampered, out-of-touch, undemocratic in-group—much the way Conant regarded the Episcopacy. American politics is now like an

upside-down version of Plato's *Republic*: the party of the common man is led by the first President to be a pure product of the postwar meritocratic apparatus, and the party of business is led by a speaker of the House who did much less well than the President at accumulating meritocratic credentials, and who regularly delivers blistering attacks on "elites."

One consequence of the public's doubts about the meritocratic system and the leaders it has produced is an unwillingness to pay the taxes that are needed to support the great public-education machine that Conant thought would replace the frontier as a guarantor of opportunity in America. As the resistance has caused the dream of a first-class free education for all to fade, the people who have suffered are those at the bottom of the social structure. They don't really have a frontier.

It was Henry Chauncey's good luck, in a lucky life, not to have to think about much of this while he was running ETS: the new elite hadn't emerged, and the arguments hadn't started. Whenever there was public grumbling about testing and education, though, he took it seriously. In 1955 a liberal weekly called *The Reporter* published an article called "The Quizmasters Fasten Onto Higher Education"; Chauncey persuaded the ETS board to let him hire another public-relations adviser to ponder the implications. The man he hired, Earl Newsom, in 1957 produced a report that was prophetic about what lay in store for ETS after Henry Chauncey retired. Newsom said this:

Its tests have influenced and in many cases determined the careers of millions of people including many of those who will provide the national leadership of the future. As an institution of national scope dealing in the guidance of human lives, it has no close parallel in our society.

Under the circumstances it is well to remember that the idea of any center of power, perhaps particularly one which classifies people, is historically viewed with misgivings by Americans. It has gotten both governmental and private institutions into trouble again and again.

Trouble in fact rained on Chauncey's quiet, bespectacled successor, William Turnbull. Chauncey would have turned aside some of it, because he was better at the things for which there were no standardized tests, such as being adept with people. But some of the trouble was unavoidable and, in a way, was Chauncey's fault, because it stemmed from a fundamental misreading of the country's character. Chauncey took the helm at ETS believing that we were witnessing, as he once put it in his notebook, "The Dawn of Social Science": a new historical age was beginning in which rationality would become the leading force in human affairs, and people would gratefully accept the guidance provided by the amazing new ability of technology to assess their capabilities. Chauncey thought that America was just waiting to be put into a rational order, if only the right system could be devised. He did help to devise a system, and America adopted it. But the country didn't stop being fundamentally unruly. ☞





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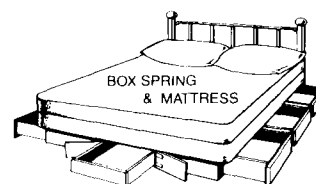
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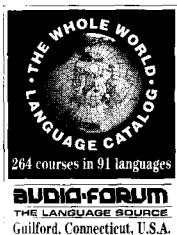
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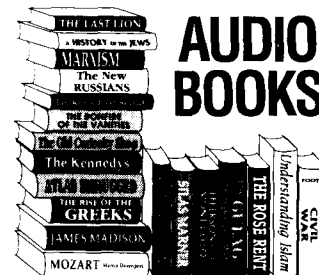
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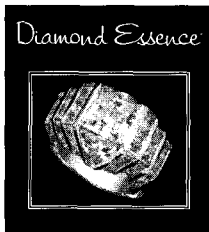
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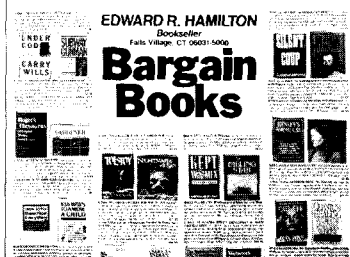
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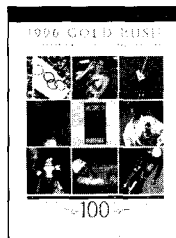
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# Unreconstructed Modernist

*How does one account  
for the fall of Pierre Boulez the composer  
and the rise of Pierre Boulez  
the conductor?*

**T**HIRTY-FIVE years ago I bought a record that changed the way I thought about music: Pierre Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître*, conducted by Robert Craft. Scored for the exotic ensemble of contralto voice, alto flute, viola, guitar, and percussion (including vibraphone, but prominently bongos), *Le Marteau* was remotely jazzy and

vaguely oriental, rhythmically frantic yet emotionally cool. It was atonal, but without the angst of most of the atonal music I knew. Heard today, it might seem quintessentially fifties—a vodka martini set to music, with instrumentation not far from what you would hear on a Chet Baker record or, with those bongos, a hi-fi demo. But at the time, I felt that I had

been granted a vision of the musical future. I sat down and wrote a piece for flute, vibraphone, and bongos, to be played as fast as possible.

My revelation was not unique. *Le Marteau* affected composers of several generations, who began to turn out flute-and-vibraphone music by the yard. Because the recording was conducted by Craft, it signaled a laying on of hands by Igor Stravinsky, who lavished praise on *Le Marteau* and predicted (perhaps ironically) that in twenty-five years Boulez, the enfant terrible of the European avant-garde, would be a concert staple.

It did not turn out that way. Today the avant-garde is a thing of the past. Boulez, who turned seventy in March, is far more active as a conductor than as a composer. The most recent recording of *Le Marteau sans maître*, widely considered the signature piece of the post-Second World War era, has never even been reissued on CD, although a forthcoming DGG disc, following a series of new releases tied to Boulez's birthday, should bring it

by David Schiff

back into circulation sometime in 1996.

Boulez remains one of the most puzzling figures in the music of our time. Although he composed *Le Marteau sans maître* when he was around thirty, it turned out to be the beginning of the end of his main creative phase. He has composed little new music over the past twenty years. In the wake of Boulez's turbulent years at the New York Philharmonic, in the mid-1970s, the writer Joan Peyser rolled out the Freudian machinery in her book *Boulez* (1976) and just sounded crass—with her suggestion, for example, that he suffered from crippling emotional inhibitions as a result of his Catholic upbringing. Today critics are more likely to see Boulez as a victim of his own vision of musical history. When modernism went out of style, they say, Boulez was left stranded. Yet the ecstatic reception Boulez receives these days when he conducts in Chicago or Vienna—neither city a bastion of modern music, from which Boulez never strays—suggests that Boulez is not so easily consigned to the historical dustheap.

I would propose a different model of Boulez's career: the typical trajectory of a mathematical genius. Like many mathematicians, Boulez had his great ideas in his early twenties, when he burst onto the Parisian musical scene as a radical composer and a scathing polemicist who intended to rewrite the history of twentieth-century music to justify his own innovations. You can hear his brash brilliance in his very first published work—the deceptively titled *Sonatine for flute and piano*, which Boulez wrote in 1946, a work that was neither small nor neo-classical.

This has to be one of the most original opus No. 1s in the history of music, because it fuses the two warring schools of modern music—those of Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Boulez saw that Stravinsky had revitalized rhythm, while Schoenberg—and, more important, his pupil Anton Webern—had reconfigured harmony through the twelve-tone technique. Yet when Boulez composed the sonatina, Stravinsky had apparently ceased his harmonic explorations, and Schoenberg was still using the rhythms of Brahms. Webern, the only composer who might have shown the way forward, was dead, shot by an American soldier in a freak accident that made him into a martyr for the Euro-

pean left. Why not combine the progressive elements of the two schools? Hurling Stravinskian rhythms at Schoenbergian harmonies, the young Boulez smashed the musical atom, releasing in the sonatina an explosion of musical violence, nervousness, and instability.

What could he do for an encore? Boulez expanded the style of the flute sonatina in two visionary cantatas based on poetry by the great surrealist René Char: *Le Visage nuptial* and *Le Soleil des eaux*. In his Second Piano Sonata, written in 1948, at the age of just twenty-three, Boulez felt sufficiently confident of his grand synthesis to take on the very heights of musical accomplishment—late Beethoven. The sonata deliberately evokes Beethoven's monumental Hammerklavier Sonata op. 106, and in the recording by Maurizio Pollini the comparison seems almost valid. The sonata was a triumph of what is termed *l'audace* in French, *chutzpah* in Yiddish.

The rapid development of Boulez's music soon reached its first crisis, however. Around 1950 Boulez befriended two composers who challenged his leadership of the avant-garde: Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage. Where Boulez had seen the future of music emerging from a crossbreeding of elements from the past, Stockhausen and Cage called for a break with all previous music. Stockhausen reduced music to "information," while Cage refused to differentiate musical sounds from either noise or silence. Having removed any remaining mystique from music, they could impose arbitrary designs on it, including pure chance. Stockhausen wrote a piano piece whose nineteen episodes could be played in whatever order the performer chose so that no two performances would be the same. Cage introduced chance into the act of composing itself by letting the *I Ching* choose his notes for him. Any formal logic in these pieces would exist solely in the minds of misguided listeners.

Boulez must have felt himself outflanked. His music entered an "experimental" phase, in which he pursued "total serialization," incorporating electronic music and elements of chance into a series of works some of which were withdrawn from performance after "unsuccessful" premieres. While corresponding with Cage (their letters have now been published), Boulez composed *Structures*,



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Book I, for two pianos, a 1952 work in which systematic “pre-composition” takes the place of traditional composition; the convergence of pitches, rhythmic values, and dynamics is caused by arbitrary ordering. At times *Structures* still sounds like Boulez—it has the edgy violence of the earlier music, though the piece gives the listener nothing to hold on to except those vestiges of the earlier music. Unlike Boulez’s earlier and later works, the music of the short-lived experimental phase sounds—judging by the few remaining recordings—nasty and astringent. But in 1953 Boulez turned again to the poetry of René Char and began to write *Le Marteau sans maître*. It was his second grand synthetic “solution,” a fusion of his youthful style with the speculative structures of Stockhausen and even the “oriental” tinge of Cage. And this time it sounded beautiful.

Just after *Le Marteau*, Boulez began to conduct—often rather shakily. He rehearsed the orchestra and choir for the 1958 Parisian premiere of Stravinsky’s *Threni*, the first completely twelve-tone piece that Stravinsky wrote; the composer himself would be at the podium on the night of the performance. It was such a disaster that Stravinsky vowed never to conduct in Paris again. Yet by 1963 Boulez could lead a knock-your-socks-off rendition of *Le Sacre du printemps* that challenged Stravinsky’s own. There were as yet no signs that conducting would detract from composing. Boulez was engaged in several major creative projects, in particular *Pli selon pli*, a huge work for soprano and orchestra, described as a portrait of Stéphane Mallarmé. This was clearly intended to be Boulez’s masterpiece, but it disappointed many listeners, Stravinsky among them. *Le Marteau sans maître* was beautiful; *Pli selon pli* was just pretty. The music glittered and shimmered, a little too much like Ravel. The nervous energy of Boulez’s earlier music was missing. In its place was an encyclopedia of coloristic subtleties and numerous opportunities for the conductor to display his skill through intricacies of rhythm and cueing. Many of Boulez’s later scores are set up as games of tag-you’re-it, in which the conductor shapes the piece within the act of performance. Boulez the composer was serving Boulez the maestro.

Figuring everything out at twenty-one can be dangerous. Boulez seemed to be

trapped in his initial creative insight, and rather than compose he devoted himself to conducting the music that had inspired his own precocious compositions.

It would be tempting to blame the fall of Boulez the composer on the rise of Boulez the conductor. From the early 1960s on Boulez devoted more and more time to conducting—first at the British Broadcasting Corporation Symphony Orchestra, then at the Cleveland Orchestra, and finally at the New York Philharmonic, where he was the controversial music director from 1971 to 1977. He now leads his own Ensemble InterContemporain, in Paris, and guest-conducts the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Vienna Philharmonic.

Even Boulez’s conducting career is curious, though. Beginning with his earliest recordings he restricted himself to a repertory of modernists: Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartók, Varèse, Berg, Schoenberg, Webern, Messiaen—many of whose works he has now recorded two or three times. Later he added Wagner and Mahler (and, just this year, some Strauss) to the list, and also the music of a few of his contemporaries: the Italian Luciano Berio, the Hungarian György Ligeti, the Englishman Harrison Birtwistle, and two oddly coupled Americans, Elliott Carter and Frank Zappa. This is a large repertory, but it has huge gaps that no other active conductor would allow. Just among twentieth-century composers Boulez does not perform Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Britten, Poulenc, or Copland. And despite his highly publicized role as a defender of new music, he has ignored the works of the minimalists and postmodernists, including Philip Glass, John Corigliano, and Alfred Schnittke.

Boulez’s biases suggest a direct link between the composer and the conductor: he conducts only works that relate to his own creative agenda—works that, as he says, open up “new terrain.” Boulez conducts these pieces as if they were his own, stripping them of their historical roots. He is interested not in connecting Mahler with Bruckner (whom he never conducts), or Webern with Brahms (ditto), but rather in showing how Mahler and Webern point the way to Boulez. This may sound narcissistic, but it has enabled Boulez to bring unique insights to his interpretations.

If Boulez’s early career can be com-

pared to that of a math genius, in his later phase he appears to be more a master politician, in the French manner. Having exhausted his own new terrain by age thirty-five, Boulez has spent the rest of his life administering it and erecting monuments, both physical and virtual. The physical monument is IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique Musique), Boulez’s personal Kremlin for research and development, at the Beaubourg, in Paris. The virtual monument is his recorded repertory.

IRCAM realizes a very French idea of a think tank—cultural monument: bring the best and brightest together in a central location, and give them total power. It’s either a formula for greatness or a white elephant—the jury is still out. To date, the acoustical research conducted at IRCAM has had little impact on the music world. *Répons*, a piece Boulez wrote to show off his technology, toured the United States in 1986 and sounded like just another tinkling and tinselly late-Boulez composition, helped not at all by its tired electronic sounds and naive light show. IRCAM has failed to produce a single major new composer, perhaps because, especially in the early years, Boulez kept out the minimalists and postmodernists, the new enfants terribles. (Boulez’s inclusion of Zappa was a halfhearted gesture to the next generation.) Yet the Ensemble InterContemporain has become one of the finest twentieth-century ensembles in the world, as its recordings of Carter, Ligeti, and Webern demonstrate. And at IRCAM, Boulez, who has always seemed ill at ease in New York, takes on the contented look of the lord of the manor.

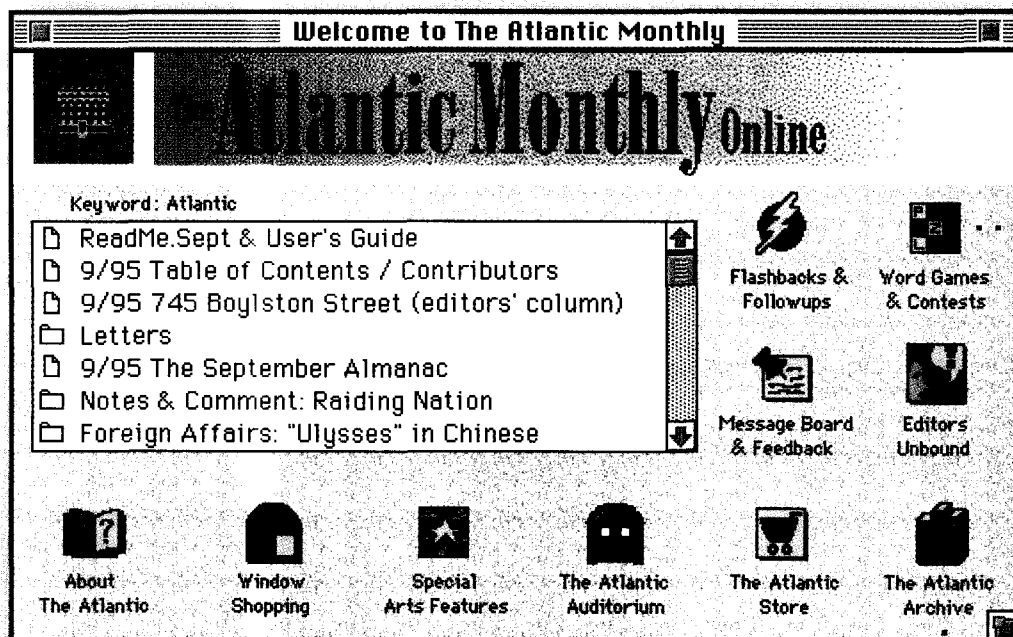
Boulez’s recordings may have a more lasting significance. They preserve his distinctive view of modernism. Modernist music, as Boulez understands it, emphasizes color and rhythm rather than the more familiar melody and harmony. Boulez has compared the music of his favorite composers to the paintings of Klee, Kandinsky, and Mondrian. Reversing a line of Wallace Stevens, Boulez might say that music is sounds, not feelings. He engages with works that are rich in tone color, and he applies an analytic prism to them, so that every element becomes audible. At rehearsals he is notorious for taking apart a chord, tuning and balancing every instrument in the orches-



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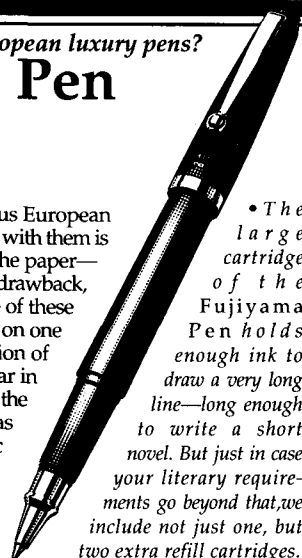
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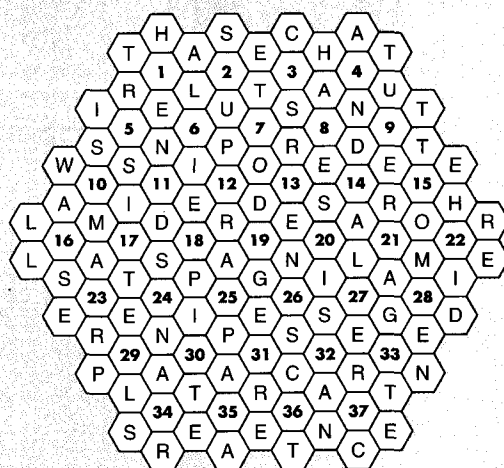
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tra until perfection is achieved. Even his detractors admit that he has the keenest ear in the business.

Boulez can be heard at his best in his new recordings of Debussy's ballet *Jeux* and Webern's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* op. 10. Debussy wrote his score for a sexually suggestive Nijinsky ballet whose man and two women are dressed for tennis. Debussy was particularly proud of the orchestration, which evokes both rustling leaves in the twilight and palpitating hearts. He said that he wanted the music to sound as if it were "illuminated from behind," and that the orchestra should be "sans pied"—weightless, in flight. Boulez captures these qualities better than anyone else ever has. You can hear every flickering element in Debussy's complex textures. This new recording is also the fastest around; it whirls breathlessly into a violent frenzy when the coy flirtation of the action gets out of control—"sans pied" indeed.

It is difficult today to explain to young people the huge impact that Webern's music had in the postwar period. After his death his music, previously barely known, became the model for the younger generation and also for older composers, such as Stravinsky and Aaron Copland, who were seeking a second youth. His style, however, was reduced to predictable clichés by his endless imitators, particularly those of the younger generation. Where he once had to be rescued from obscurity, he now has to be saved from the dulling effects of familiarity, and Boulez's performances do just that. In the magical, minuscule *Five Pieces*, scored for an orchestra of solo instruments including guitar, mandolin, harp, harmonium, and cowbells, Webern distilled music into fleeting sparks of color, or distant, barely audible overtones. For some listeners these fragments may mark the end point of a tradition—the smallest shards remaining from the wreckage of a Mahler symphony. For Boulez, however, they marked a beginning. His performance of the *Five Pieces* makes them sound like music for Adam in Eden. Every color glistens, every tiny gesture tingles. The central piece, a litany played against tolling bells, reveals the moment in which music brings time to a stop. Listen to these pieces as if they came from nowhere, as if you had never heard a note of music before in your life, and Boulez will open up a new world for you—as Webern did for him so many years ago. ♫

## Slavery and the Jews

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**A**LMOST as soon as it appeared, in 1991, *The Secret Relationship* generated a controversy that centered more on its intentions than its scholarship. The noise level was heightened in 1993 by the turmoil that swirled around Professor Tony Martin, of Wellesley College. A tenured professor in Wellesley's Department of Africana Studies, Martin assigned to one of his classes portions of the book, which singles out Jews for special prominence in the Atlantic slave trade and for having played a particularly prominent role in the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. He was accused of anti-Semitism, and wrote a brief book to refute the charges. The title of Martin's book, *The Jewish Onslaught: Despatches From*

*the Wellesley Battlefield*, gave a clear preview of his opinions. It was a mixture of discussion, factual refutation, and angry recrimination. This last predominated, with paragraphs that opened using language like "To the Jews, and to their favourite Negroes who have insisted on attacking me I say . . ." His views on *The Secret Relationship's* use of historical materials amounted to a barrage of enthusiastic endorsements. Ironically, Martin's assertion that "Jews were very much in the mainstream of European society as far as the trade in African human beings was concerned" was very close to what many Jewish scholars had claimed some thirty years before.

Martin, in one of his endorsements, made a startling assertion concerning slave ownership by Jews: "Using the research of Jewish historians, the book suggests that based on the 1830 census, Jews actually had a higher per capita slave ownership than for the white population as a whole." *The Secret Relationship* does in fact approach making that suggestion, and

since the claim would appear to be a pivotal one, it is worth examining.

In order to assess such a claim, one must resort to details. Martin's purported actuality is wrong on its face if applied to the "white population" of the United States "as a whole," because in 1830 only a handful of white northerners still owned slaves. Jews were concentrated in the North, and they constituted a very small minority there. Even if the statement is taken as applying only to the states in the American South that had not adopted gradual emancipation laws, it remains badly flawed. A careful and honest footnote in *The Secret Relationship* reveals that "Jewish scholars" had concluded that Jews in the South lived mostly in towns and cities. Neither this book nor Martin's explains the significance of this fact. In actuality, slave ownership was much more common in southern urban areas than in the southern countryside. The relatively high proportion of Jewish slaveholding was a function of the concentration of Jews in cities and towns, not of



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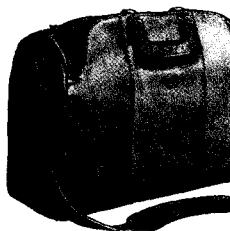
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their descent or religion. It is also the case that urban slaveholders of whatever background owned fewer slaves on average than rural slaveholders, including those on large plantations. Thus the proportion of slaveholders has never been an accurate measure of the social or economic importance of slaveholding, unless it is assessed on a broadly regional or state-by-state basis. In this instance, as in so many others, the statistical data do not stand up and cry out their own true significance.

*The Secret Relationship* is interesting in many respects. It has an unnamed editor and provides no indication of personal authorship. The title page declares that it was "Prepared by The Historical Research Department [of] The Nation of Islam," but does not explain why this is "Volume One" or what may be offered in ensuing volumes. The book is ostensibly a scholarly work, replete with a short bibliography and a huge collection of footnotes. Its opening "Note on Sources" asserts that it "has been compiled primarily from Jewish historical literature."

A second title page of *The Secret Relationship* announces that "Blacks and Jews have recently begun to question their relationship and its strategic role in their individual development" and that the book "is intended to provide an historical perspective for intellectual debate of this crucial social matter." The word "individual" raises the question whether persons or groups are intended. Individual African-Americans and individual Jews as persons? Or two distinct individual groups?

As for the mechanics of scholarship, they present a central difficulty. The footnotes are extremely difficult to check in the form in which they are presented: although they follow the custom (in common with most of the humanities but not the social sciences) of providing a complete citation upon first mention and a shortened author-title-page version for ensuing ones, and are placed at the bottom of the page, they are numbered consecutively—all 1,275 of them—rather than starting afresh with each chapter. A reader encountering a brief reference to a presumably important article on Jewish slaveholding in the South (such as one on page 304, in footnote No. 1,238) can find a fuller citation—on page 91, in footnote No. 349—only after nearly an hour of thumbing through the book. Having gone this far, the reader must then consult the

"Footnote Abbreviations" at the beginning of the book in order to discover a reference that might be usable in a library. The citation names a three-volume work edited by Abraham J. Karp. Upon consulting that work, which actually has five volumes, one learns that the article in question is by Bertram W. Korn. The same article by Korn is listed in *The Secret Relationship's* "Selected Bibliography," but in another set of volumes, with an incorrect date and no indication that it was reprinted elsewhere several times.

Footnotes matter because verifiability depends on them. In the Karp-Korn instance we are nearly home, though we do not yet know when the article was published—and, of course, the date matters greatly. We can determine it only by consulting actual copies of the article, which turns out to be "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865," which originated as an address by the president of the American Jewish Historical Society and was first published in 1961.

The date, it turns out, falls within a period when Jewish scholarship about the history of Jews in the United States was moving away from predominantly filiopietistic studies of ancestry and achievement and toward a more sophisticated assessment of the role of Jews in American culture. Korn's article contains a great deal of specific information to which *The Secret Relationship* has been thoroughly faithful. Overall, though, the conclusions Korn drew from his data were very different: he made a strong and persuasive case that there were few Jews in the planting class in the South, that Jews had historically been forced into commercial enterprises, that in the Old South they were typically city dwellers, that a small number participated in the domestic slave trade, that they treated their slaves no better or worse than other slaveholders, and that the few Jews in the South without exception endorsed slavery. The thrust of Korn's article was that Jews were not much different from other white southerners in their views on race and slavery.

Dating such historical writing is critical, given the shifting state of historical scholarship over time. Many of the works cited in *The Secret Relationship* are so old that it would be generous to call them outdated. Of the first sixty-odd, nearly a third date from before 1950 and eight from the 1890s. In contrast, a recent pam-

phlet on the Atlantic slave trade that was published by the American Historical Association as an aid to scholars and teachers cites four sources that date from 1949 through the late 1960s and twenty-eight published since 1970.

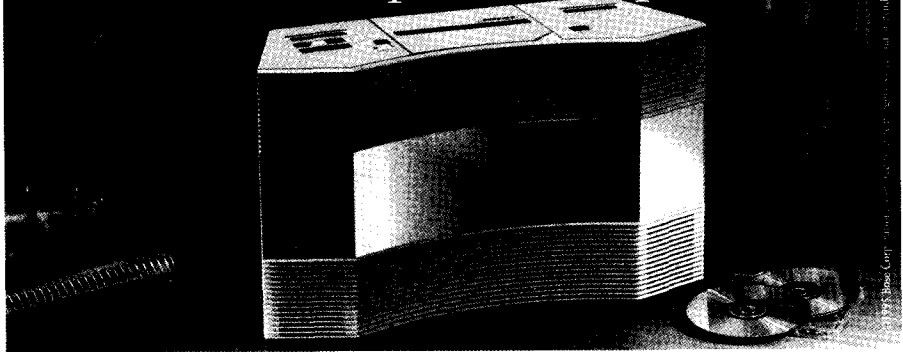
**Y**ET surely the compilers of *The Secret Relationship* will feel that such disparities merely confirm their case—that by avoiding these older historical writings, the history establishment has been hiding the facts about the important role played by Jews in the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in the New World. The AHA pamphlet does not, in fact, even mention Jews. The compilers will no doubt take this omission as further confirmation that the participation of Jews has been kept a secret.

A more serious difficulty with *The Secret Relationship* lies in its general stance toward historical evidence. The compilers assumed that the book would be most persuasive if it were based almost entirely on “Jewish sources”—that is, retrospective histories written by Jews—and that there would be general agreement with the proposition that each group can most persuasively write its own history, a proposition that most historians find either naive or dangerous or both. On occasion this strategy deprives *The Secret Relationship* of evidence that would have bolstered its case, as with estimates of the total number of Africans killed by the Atlantic slave trade. The compilers cite figures gathered by both Jewish and non-Jewish Western historians but ignore the higher estimates claimed by Joseph Inikori, an established scholar from Nigeria.

The compilers have avoided another distinction that most historians regard as crucial—that between primary sources, written at the time, and secondary ones, written later on the basis of the primary sources. The evidence presented in the footnotes consists almost entirely of secondary historical accounts, written mostly by Jews and often in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Jews newly arrived from Europe were trying to establish themselves as full participants in their new country. At that time many of those immigrants saw the African slave trade and slavery as a key feature of the American experience, and participation in it as truly American. In fact, it was.

Many of these early Jewish-American

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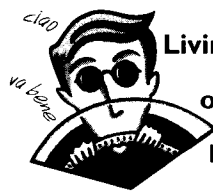
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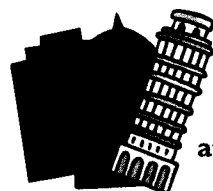
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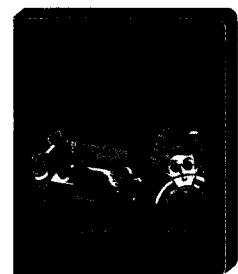
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writers thus missed the hideousness and the tragedy of what they were describing. Even Korn's 1961 article today seems downright blind to the suffering of the victims of the slave trade and their descendants. Since then, however, Jewish-American scholars have written some of the best studies of the internal workings of African-American slave communities in North America, and have been applauded by many African-American scholars for their understanding.

In assessing most historical works it is necessary to focus on mere details, on the minutiae that constitute the evidentiary base of the enterprise. *The Secret Relationship* includes numerous lists of Jewish shipowners and slaveholders. Its final chapter catalogues the involvement of numerous people with Jewish names who are documented as having participated in the persecution of Africans and especially African-Americans.

In addition, there are seventeen tables based on official U.S. Census data. These are drawn from the years 1790, 1820, and 1830, simply because those years are mentioned in secondary accounts written by Jews. There has been no analysis of the original data. The censuses of 1850 and 1860 are not considered, although the data from those two years were more informative.

To many readers, quibbling about census material may seem trivial; but when one gets down to individual cases, names and details are important in any historical work. The city of Newport, Rhode Island, was indeed active in the eighteenth-century slave and rum trades, and it had a flourishing community of Jewish merchants. Readers of *The Secret Relationship* are told that the writing of Jewish historians "seems to suggest that *all* the stills in Newport were owned by the Jews" in the eighteenth century. So much for the making of rum, a commodity commonly used in the slave trade and also a direct product of that same traffic. But what, then, is one to make of the fact that members of the Coggeshall family, who first came to Rhode Island as Quakers and later switched to the Church of England, were in the business of distilling on the eve of the American Revolution? In 1772 both Nathaniel Coggeshalls (father and son) were "distillers."

Readers wanting to explore such a matter will not be helped by the book's

index, which has no entry under "Newport," even though that little city is discussed or mentioned on at least eight pages. Similarly, there are no entries for much briefer mentions of Natchez and New Orleans, though other cities are there, such as Detroit—not in the *Ds* but in the *Ms*, under "Michigan."

**T**HERE are several interrelated problems with this study. It sets out to reshape the prevailing historical record concerning the treatment of Africans and African-Americans during the period of the slave trade and slavery. Far from asking any question at all, this book begins with an answer—that Jews were especially important in exploiting Africans. It is able to demonstrate, at least ostensibly, that they were. This is the central difficulty: the book sets out to prove a thesis and pays little attention to evidence that might modify or contradict it.

If one were to inquire more neutrally into what role Jews played in the Atlantic slave trade, one would find that it was a considerable one during the formative years of the trade, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and a very small one when the trade reached much greater volume, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This change in the role of Jews relative to the roles of other Europeans had to do with shifts in power and culture that occurred among various Atlantic-European nations over a period of some 500 years. The trade was dominated first by the Portuguese, then by the Dutch, and then by the English and, to a much lesser extent, the French.

The reasons for the important role of Jews in the early years of the slave trade are not hard to find. To put the matter in summary terms, Jews in medieval Europe had effectively been pushed by the Western branch of the Christian Church away from land ownership and into commerce and financial dealings. During those early years of western overseas expansion many Jews continued to find opportunities for drawing wealth from commerce and finance. Under heavy threat in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many Portuguese and Spanish Jews found refuge in the Netherlands, a quasi-nation that by that time had a widely reputed tolerance for religious diversity. Jewish citizens of the Netherlands were able to participate in domestic and foreign trade, including the

slave trade on the coast of West Africa and in the Americas. These Jews, along with many Christian Dutch traders, supplied slaves not only to the Dutch colonial enterprises in Brazil and Surinam but also to Curaçao and other islands in the Antilles for transshipment to the New World colonies of other European nations. Ironically, Jews were therefore able to make major investments in landed enterprises—which in tropical America meant slave plantations—in Brazil and then Surinam.

This brutal trade in human beings was carried on by various African peoples and sociopolitical entities in West and West Central Africa. The participation of these groups also waxed and waned over the 500-year period. Internal developments in Africa played an important part in determining how the trade varied from place to place and from time to time. The expansion of Dahomey and of the Asante kingdom, for example, along with the declension of power in Oyo, had fully as much effect upon neighboring African peoples as the different but roughly parallel shifts in the balance of power among European nations had upon Europe.

Developments in Africa are of course not the concern of *The Secret Relationship*. Owing to the nature of available data, historians will never know as much about international, inter-ethnic, and interreligious conflicts in western Africa as they know about those in Western Europe. In the latter region Protestants, Jews, and Roman Catholics, who lived in several political entities, traded in human beings with a great many more societies in Africa, whose members thought of their differences in such distinct terms as to defy comparison, but to whom such differences also mattered greatly.

One aspect of the present issue, however, is utterly clear: by focusing on the importance of the activities of one internationally distributed religious group of Europeans, the Jews, this book ignores diversities in Africa. In addition, by treating Africans as mere objects of trade, it deprives all Africans of their own *agency*, of their capacity to control or at least deal with their lives and their history, including the activities of powerful men who enslaved other Africans and traded them to Europeans. In effect, it treats millions of African people as a mere undifferentiated blob, a pool of helpless victims totally lacking in the perception, will, and power



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necessary to resist or to take advantage of economic opportunities. Such a focus radically distorts the historical record.

This theme also has a depressingly familiar ring, because for many years white Americans were saying almost exactly the same thing about black Americans. The dusty old image is still clear in its reverberatory way—*those people* really couldn't accomplish anything, for *they* were always and inherently acted upon, rather than taking active roles in determining their fate. Thus the reader is thrust backward in time, forced to stare at facing mirrors. The reflections bounce back and forth, continually conveying the earliest images generated not on the West African coast but in Western Europe and in its New World settlements. Those images originated with the oppressors, not the oppressed. ☞

## The Moral State of Marriage

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**F**ABULOUS divorce used to be the prerogative of the rich and famous, but not anymore. Over the past three decades, as divorce has become fully democratized, there has been a growing demand by the "little people" (in Leona Helmsley's memorable phrase) for the secrets of fabulous divorce. And who better to instruct the masses than America's

most celebrated ex-wife, Ivana Trump?

Since her high-profile split from Donald, Ivana's life and fortunes have improved. She has ventured into fiction with two novels, *For Love Alone* and *Free to Love*, and has moved into a successful sales career with her signature line of clothing, cosmetics, and jewelry, now available on the Home Shopping Network. Better still, since her divorce she has lost weight, gained a new beau, and made the best-dressed list. Now Ivana seeks to reach other women going through divorce with the inspirational message in the title of her book: *The Best Is Yet to Come*.

Her book breaks new ground in one important way. Scores of advice books on divorce have appeared over the past two decades, but in popular advice literature, as in so many other domains of life, there is a gender gap. Divorce books for women emphasize personal growth and liberation, while those for men emphasize "winning" at the game of divorce (typical examples are *Divorced Women*, *New Lives* for women, and *Winning Your Divorce: A Man's Survival Guide*). In *The Best Is Yet to Come*, Ivana bridges the gender gap with the ultimate divorce fantasy. She shows women how to boost their savings accounts and their self-esteem, not to mention their faces and fanes. As she puts it, divorce is the ultimate makeover.

On the financial-makeover side Ivana's advice is straightforward: "get yourself a great settlement—and before you do, take his wallet to the cleaners." Of course, some women don't know the first thing about their husbands' financial status, so it may be necessary to do some snooping and spying: "In this game we call divorce, whoever has the most information wins." Ivana recommends a kind of grown-up version of a treasure hunt, in which wives search for clues to their husbands' net worth by following a paper trail of credit-card bills, bank statements—indeed, anything "that comes to the house with a dollar sign on it." Somewhere, she predicts, is the prize—that little piece of paper on which men write down what they're worth: stocks, cash, property, the whole caboodle. "I don't know exactly why men do this," her financial guru shrugs. "I just know they do." You can almost hear the Czech-born Ivana heave a weary Old World sigh of assent.

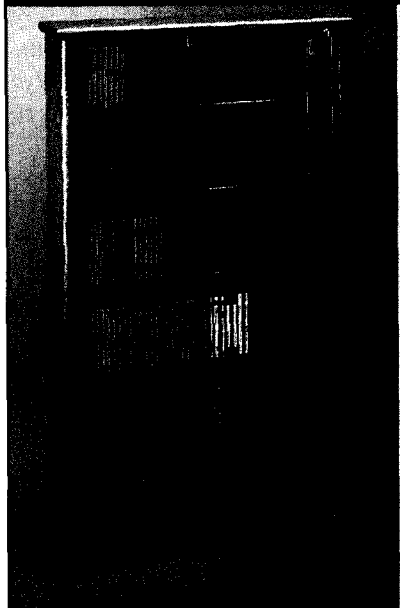
On the self-esteem and personal-growth side, divorce requires a complete overhaul. Throwing out a spouse is like cleaning out a messy closet. You get rid of the stuff from last year and the mistakes from the year before, the detritus and junk of the past. The emotional airing-out gives women a chance to take stock, to look at themselves critically. "Have you been living in the fashion past?" Ivana gently chides, before delivering the hardball truth: Marriage puts too many women in a rut. Married women lose their sense of self, their competitive edge, their initiative and independence. Their sex lives become boring and predictable. However upsetting and unexpected, therefore, the break-up of a marriage brings a bracing shock of recognition: "I've been letting myself go."

Next Ivana suggests a good, cleansing shopping spree: "Get rid of your grungy married-woman's underwear and go for the colors and the silks and the lace." The shopping spree is fun, a chance to take last revenge on your soon-to-be-ex's American Express card. But the hard work of the divorce makeover lies ahead. Divorce is a chance to shed old skin: Ivana strongly advises the use of alpha-hydroxy acid, a key ingredient in her new Ivana line of cosmetics, to exfoliate the skin. If you're still feeling saggy, she concedes, you may have to consult a plastic surgeon. "Explore. Experiment. See? There are very nice words that start with 'ex.'"

*The Best Is Yet to Come* is a cross between *Lifestyles of the Rich and Divorced* and a Home Shopping Network infomercial. Ivana has the innocence of the very rich ("Who knew cars had to be inspected once a year? Perhaps till now you had a driver who took care of such things"). But she also has the instincts of a natural-born seller: "By the time this book is in your hands," she writes on page five, "Ivana perfume will be available for you to enjoy."

In sharing the secrets of successful divorce, Ivana tries her darndest to be democratic. Her own revenge shopping spree focused on fancy bed linens ("Pratesi and Frette—very expensive, but they'll last forever"), but she expresses sensitivity to women from all economic walks of life: "You can do plenty of damage in Cal-dor's." Still, as the ex-Mrs. Trump confesses, she's "more a Le Cirque person than a Taco Bell person," and her Le

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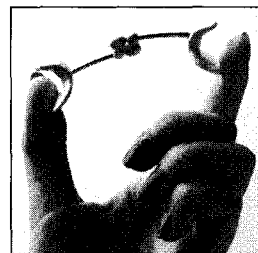
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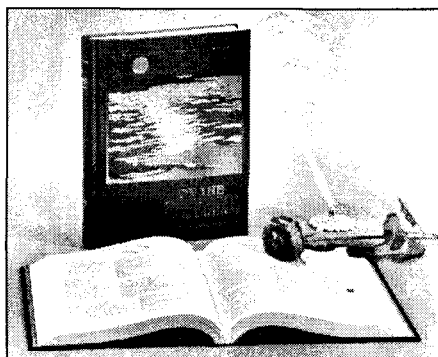
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# Poetry Contest \$24,000 in Prizes



*The National Library of Poetry  
to award 250 total prizes to  
amateur poets in coming months*

**Owings Mills, Maryland** – The National Library of Poetry has just announced that \$24,000 in prizes will be awarded over the next 12 months in the North American Open Amateur Poetry Contest. The contest is open to everyone and entry is free.

"We're especially looking for poems from new or unpublished poets," indicated Howard Ely, spokesperson for The National Library of Poetry, "we have a ten year history of awarding large prizes to talented poets who have never before won any type of writing competition."

## How To Enter

Anyone may enter the competition simply by sending in one original poem, any subject, any style to:

**The National Library of Poetry  
11419 Cronridge Drive  
PO Box 704-1494  
Owings Mills, MD 21117**

The poem should be no more than 20 lines, and the poet's name and address must appear on the top of the page. "Each poem received will be acknowledged, usually within seven weeks," indicated Mr. Ely. Every poet who enters will receive an evaluation of their artistry by the judges.

## Possible Publication

Many submitted poems will also be considered for inclusion in one of The National Library of Poetry's forthcoming hardbound anthologies. Previous anthologies published by the organization have included, *On the Threshold of a Dream*, *Days of Future's Past*, *Of Diamonds and Rust*, and *Moments More to Go*, among others.

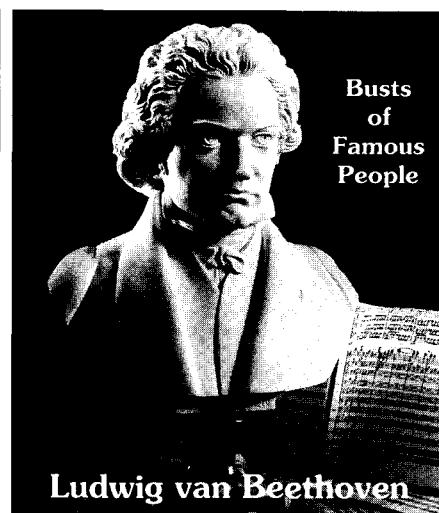
"Our anthologies routinely sell out because they are truly enjoyable reading," added Ely, "and they are also a sought-after sourcebook for poetic talent by the publishers, recording companies, and the media."

Cirque side takes over as she shares her secrets of how to dismiss household staff and how to shop for a good plastic surgeon and a personal trainer. It is hard to be mad at Ivana, though, because every page or two you have to put down the book and laugh. In fact, *The Best Is Yet to Come* is the funniest book on divorce I've ever read.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to treat the book as a joke. Like all great marketers, Ivana is culturally adept as well as commercially astute. She has a great feel for the mainstream values she seeks to exploit, and her book, properly read and appreciated, tells us much about what is distinctive about the American way of divorce.

For one thing, Ivana's commercial exploitation of divorce is thoroughly in the American grain. A century ago western state legislators and entrepreneurs made divorce a staple of their economic-development strategy by setting the residency requirement for divorce at a mere few months, attracting easterners to their hotels and resorts. Today the commerce in divorce has gone far beyond the schemes of nineteenth-century entrepreneurs. Over the past three decades a huge divorce industry, with a booming professional service sector of lawyers, therapists, financial experts, and child psychiatrists, has sprung up to harvest the fruits of family discord. The commercial tradition may help to explain why polls show that Republicans are more tolerant of divorce than Democrats and why Republican leaders, for all their high-minded talk of family values, are skittish about criticizing divorce.

If marketplace values are part of an established divorce tradition, divorce has only recently been harnessed to the great American tradition of self-improvement. Nonetheless, the idea that marital breakup can contribute to personal growth and fulfillment—a new and better you—has enormous appeal in the nation with the highest divorce rate in the industrialized world. Although most divorce-advice books cast self-improvement in psychological terms, as part of emotional growth, Ivana's approach harks back to a much older tradition: Ivana is the self-made woman, getting on in the world through pluck and luck (and a multimillion-dollar divorce settlement). Her view of the "game" of divorce is equally quaint, re-



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calling the bad old days of fault-based divorce, when private detectives skulked around seedy motels, and wives looked for lipstick on collars. Nonetheless, her larger themes are central to the contemporary divorce culture. The association of divorce with a new life, a renewed spirit, an awakening from a slumberous and zombie-like marital existence, pervades popular American thinking on marital breakup. Too, Ivana's persona as a woman "made over" through her divorce reflects broader cultural ideas about divorce as the means for women to take initiative and express their independence. Men may also use divorce to escape into a new identity, but men's propensity to divorce is associated with classic forms of bad behavior—infidelity, alcoholism, violence—rather than with "growthful" change.

**I**F divorce provides opportunities for self-invention, marriage makes no competing cultural claims. In recent years marriage has been identified with stasis, stagnation, or, worse, oppression and depression. Of course, Americans haven't given up on marriage entirely, but there is evidence of growing disenchantment. Both marriage and remarriage rates are declining, while less formal, more easily dissoluble unions are on the rise. This disenchantment may explain why marriage attracts so little attention from family researchers. In fact, if you wander through college bookstores looking for scholarly studies on the subject, you might easily conclude from the meager offerings that marriage is a cultic practice, remote from everyday life and concerns.

Now Judith Wallerstein, a clinical psychologist who has spent many years studying divorcing couples and their children, turns her eye on marriage. I know Wallerstein, and therefore I can say with some confidence that she is not a booster of marriage at all costs. However, in *The Good Marriage*, a study of fifty happily married couples, including some in second marriages, she and the writer Sandra Blakeslee offer a remarkably sunny and affecting portrait of marriage and its satisfactions. What we learn is that a good marriage falls into the art of the possible.

Contrary to the view that marriage stunts personal growth, Wallerstein treats marriage as psychologically dynamic, requiring spouses to change over time in response to each other and also to de-

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## Israel's Peace with the PLO

**Can the leopard change his spots...the wolf become a lamb?**

Two years ago, the world was electrified by "the handshake" and the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO. The Israelis promised the PLO control initially over Gaza and Jericho, with autonomy over all of the "West Bank" and "final status" discussions on Jerusalem to follow. With two years of experience behind us, one wonders where this is going to lead.

### What are the facts?

**The PLO and Yassir Arafat.** The aim is and has always been the notorious "phased plan": to eliminate Israel in two stages—first by creating a Palestinian state in any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment an allied Arab assault against the truncated and critically vulnerable Jewish state.

Since the signing of the Oslo agreement two years ago, Arafat has not fulfilled the promises that he has made and the assurances that he has given. Terror has increased; more Israelis have been murdered and maimed by the Palestinians than in any previous comparable period. Until the "handshake" Arafat was officially declared a terrorist by the United States government and was not

allowed entry into our country. He is personally responsible for hundreds of assassinations and terrorist attacks. The fact

that such a man could appear on the White House lawn, that he could shake hands with the President of the United States, and that he could be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace is truly astonishing.

#### A mortal danger to Israel.

Turning over control of the Gaza strip and any part of the "West Bank" to the Arabs puts Israel in mortal peril. The basic conflict is not between Israel and the "Palestinians", with whom some accommodation, some arrangement of autonomy, could certainly be reached. The basic conflict is with the Arab

nations, most of which, with the sole exception of Egypt and Jordan, are still in a state of war with Israel. They are armed to the teeth, not just with "conventional" weapons, but with missiles that even today can reach any part of Israel, and with weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological and nuclear.

With the "West Bank" in Arab hands, missiles won't be needed. Mortars and shoulder-held Stingers would suffice to threaten every commercial flight into and out of Israel, to impede the take-off of military airplanes and to threaten and rain destruction on the principal cities of Israel and its most important industrial, commercial and military installations. Sure, the world would insist that the new Palestinian state be demilitarized. But does anybody really believe that with

Israel surrounded by mortal enemies, they would allow such a military vacuum to exist for any length of

time—even in the unlikely case that the Palestinians would so desire? If it yielded the "West Bank", Israel would be only nine miles wide at its narrow waist—it would take no major military effort to slice it in half and to destroy it. No country should expose itself to such peril. But with the Judean hills in enemy hands, and without the elaborate warning system on those hills, Israel is totally indefensible and at the mercy of its enemies. That is the opinion of 100 U.S. generals and admirals who so reported to the President and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

We all want peace and, surely, besieged Israel, which has been under constant attack since the day of its creation, wants peace more than anybody. And it is likely that such fervent wish for peace has led Israel into making fateful concessions to Yassir Arafat and the PLO. It will be almost impossible to reverse what has been done. The process of empowering the Palestinians will almost certainly result in a Palestinian state. Will it, as we are told, be "democratic" and peaceful? Not likely! Every one of the 22 Arab states is totalitarian, ruled autocratically, and ruthlessly abusive of human rights. Another Lebanon, carved on Israel's back, with never-ending strife and bloodshed is much more likely—a source of constant terrorist attacks against Israel and ultimately the source of a new Mid-East war. In such a war, Israel's ability to defend itself and to prevail would be in serious question.

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velop the capacity to adjust to external change. This dynamic potential is the source of her cautious optimism about the possibility of a good marriage. Marriages that work offer strong evidence that "adults have an enormous capacity to continue to grow," just as happy second marriages, with their potential to rekindle trust and love, offer the strongest argument for divorce, according to Wallerstein. Perhaps the most touching stories in the book deal with "rescue marriages," in which people who have grown up in less than perfect families—even some who have experienced traumatic emotional or physical abuse—create marriages that "undo earlier suffering" and repair psychic damage.

Unlike Tolstoy's happy families, however, happy marriages are not all alike. These partnerships range from the traditional, with sharp gender divisions in family roles and responsibilities, to the egalitarian, where bread-winning and child-rearing tasks are shared. Wallerstein takes no ideological position on which type of marriage is best, but one of the book's most fascinating insights is that the egalitarian marriage, the model most highly prized and increasingly pursued by many younger Americans, is "frighteningly fragile." Married couples with demanding careers can be pulled apart by jealousy, competitiveness, loneliness, worries about children, or sheer sleep deprivation. Worse, their taut working lives leave little room for midcourse adjustments, let alone unscheduled crises with a child who doesn't play by the developmental rule book. Of all marriage types, therefore, this one requires the most constant vigilance and the most heroic effort.

More broadly, however, this study suggests that the challenges of marriage are essentially moral. That, I suspect, is why it is called *The Good Marriage* rather than *The Happy Marriage*. The book implicitly presents marriage as a school of virtue, a domain that requires tact and restraint along with open and honest communication, kindness and gratitude along with assertiveness and autonomy. Take the matter of fighting. Good marriages are not free of conflict. However, the conflict is governed by a respect for the partner's deepest vulnerabilities. No matter how fierce the anger, it stops short of the cruellest cut. Spouses learn what the



relationship can tolerate without breaking.

At the same time, marriage requires the exercise of moral imagination. One thing the couples in these good marriages have in common is a vision of the marriage as a "superordinate" entity—something that is separate from and larger than its two parts. The men and women in this study speak of protecting "the marriage" almost as if it were their child; it is a creation they cherish and share. In another sense, too, good marriages are expressions of the imagination. These happily married people see their spouses as essentially admirable and good—as morally worthy. Many express admiration for their partners' conscience or honesty, or praise their courage in overcoming earlier obstacles in life. (Drawing on her research on divorce, Wallerstein observes that many people whose marriages eventually fail never had an idealized image of their partners to begin with.)

Much of what I have described is never made explicit. In fact, one of the nice things about *The Good Marriage* is its

modesty. It doesn't pretend to offer a philosophy or even a lecture on marriage. It takes no position on the ideologically charged issues of women's marital roles and status. Equally important, it ignores the two most common ways of talking about marriage—as a contract negotiated between two equal parties and as the pathway to individual fulfillment. For this reason it is refreshingly free of "rights" talk and therapy talk. Indeed, Wallerstein places much more emphasis on the development of good judgment and a moral sense than on the acquisition of effective communication or negotiation skills.

*The Good Marriage* offers powerful evidence in support of a model for relationships that are based not on theories of exchange or self-interest but on notions of sacrifice and altruism. "I suddenly got it about ensemble work," an actor told Wallerstein. "Ensemble is when you work as hard for the other guy's moment as you do for your own." *The Good Marriage* is an argument for an ensemble theory of marriage. ☞

## BRIEF REVIEWS

### Are We Alone?

by Paul Davies. Basic,  
160 pages, \$20.00.

Professor Davies teaches natural philosophy at the University of Adelaide and promises to keep technical jargon to a minimum—or try to. His subject is "Philosophical Implications of the Discovery of Extraterrestrial Life," and technical jargon, in the form of mathematical calculations well beyond the three-Rs level, proves unavoidable. Unexpectedly, considering its subtitle, the book is more concerned with the pros and cons of the existence of extraterrestrial life than with the effect that the proof of such life would have on human thinking, which can be summarized as a heavy jolt. The author believes that extraterrestrial life

does exist, but he presents contrary theories with such fair-minded clarity that a nonscientist reader with no entrenched opinion on the matter may find all the arguments equally plausible and come "out by the same door where in I went."

### Red Earth and Pouring Rain

by Vikram Chandra.  
Little, Brown, 560 pages,  
\$24.45.

Abhay, home in India after studying in the United States, has so far forgotten the proprieties as to shoot the white-faced monkey infesting his parents' roof. The victim survives, but the sacrilege deranges the proper functioning of the wheel, for the monkey recovers human

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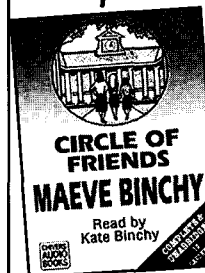
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consciousness and memory of his last human incarnation, as a somewhat troublesome poet named Sanjay. It also attracts the attention of three gods (Abhay's parents privately hope that their house will not be required to accommodate the entire pantheon), who arrive at a treaty. Sanjay will not be killed and reincarnated as a crab if he can hold an audience long enough with a good enough story. Sanjay is optimistic. "I won't tell what happened," he promises. "I'll make a lie. I will construct a finely-coloured dream, a thing of passion and joy, a huge lie that will entertain and instruct and enlighten. I'll make The Big Indian Lie." That is a large promise, but the monkey keeps it—or rather, Mr. Chandra does, with interlocking and overlapping tales of wars and intrigues, villains and holy men, jewels and blood, Alexander of Macedon and Abhay in Texas. The novel becomes the history of India converted into the brilliant disorder of a kaleidoscope. It is adroitly written, constantly interesting, lyrical, fantastic, brutal, and, at bottom, serious. Mr. Chandra can make a lightning bolt look like a Roman candle—but that bolt strikes.

### Peculiar People: The Story of My Life

by Augustus Hare.  
Academy Chicago, 320 pages,  
\$26.95.

Augustus John Cuthbert Hare (1834–1903) published his autobiography in his old age. It ran to six volumes, admittedly in large type, and has been edited to reasonable size by Anita Miller and James Papp. Hare was born into an aristocratic English family, most of whose members were considerably worse than peculiar. As a small boy, he might well have envied the happy life of Oliver Twist. As an adult, he had no money—at least by his standards—but he "collected cousins as others collect stamps" and could always find a country house to put him up. He also collected anecdotes, with which he enlivened a series of guidebooks that flourished for decades, and with which, as a raconteur, he became a valued guest. His text includes a lively description of Mark Twain, a report on Thomas Carlyle complete with Scottish accent, tales of ghosts and ghastrics, and complaints about his publisher. His instrument was the pen rather

than the harp, but in his way Hare was a wandering minstrel, and he is an attractive and sometimes witty acquaintance.

### The Queen of the Tambourine

by Jane Gardam.  
St. Martin's, 240 pages,  
\$20.95.

Ms. Gardam's mischievous, ultimately poignant novel examines what happens to a clever, imaginative, lively woman whose husband reaches the rank of senior civil servant and maroons her in a stodgy, semi-posh London suburb with no occupation but good works and no reliable company but the dog. The woman reports on Christmas: "Sarah and Simon sent me talcum-powder and soap. Charles gave me a card which contained another card inside it telling me that for a year I am a Friend of Redundant Churches. This means that I am authorised now to visit any decaying church in the United Kingdom, taking a friend with me free of charge. Henry gave me a pot plant—a transparent cyclamen, its flowers limp with thirst, its rubber-tube stalks bent down. When I watered it it gave up the ghost." One can see why the first-person narrator of this ingenious novel, who appears initially to be an officious and annoying busybody, has in fact gone quietly mad. Ms. Gardam's oblique approach is humorous and expertly controlled from its deceptive beginning to its ambiguous end.

### Hunters and Gatherers

by Francine Prose.  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux,  
247 pages, \$20.00.

Ms. Prose's heroine, Martha, a stolidly unimaginative fact checker at a stolidly moderate women's magazine, is moping on the beach at Fire Island when she falls in with a group of enthusiastic, demonstratively affectionate worshippers of the great Goddess. They are led by Isis Moonwagon. With no other social life to speak of, Martha becomes a misfit member of the androphobic female-solidarity cult, and winds up with them on a pilgrimage to study with a Native American shamaness in the wilds of Arizona. Isis Moonwagon is accident-prone, and so is the trip. One ridiculous contretemps follows another; the lesbian lovers split; the

(Continued on page 122)



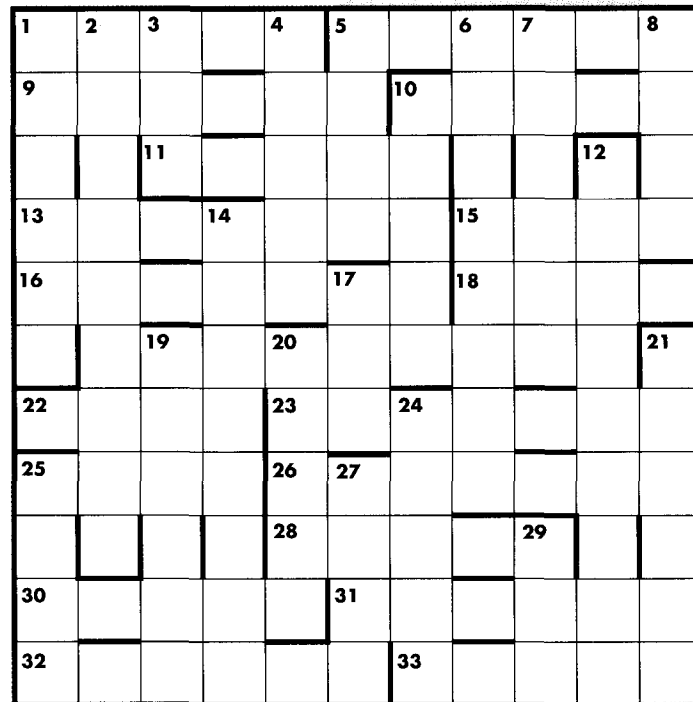
# THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

## Fortunetelling

We predict you're going to have some trouble fitting 11 of the clue answers below into the puzzle diagram. What makes us so sure? We've looked into your future with our paranormal powers of prognostication. The unclued Across entry in the center of the diagram reveals our message—and our medium. To make your progress all the cloudier, answer lengths have been withheld from the clues. There are six capitalized answers.

*The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 108.*



### Across

1. Baseball player, one of the last remaining Reds, losing face
5. Overheated forms of public transportation leading to travel stops
9. Fur-bearing shrew that's not too thin in winter?
10. Someone like Grumpy or Doc finally cast
11. Remove a coat filled with down for father
13. Religious teacher rips something on TV? (*two words*)
15. Spike, seated in gallery, is sadder
16. Monastery's head wears collar for a kind of support
18. The sound made by somebody hurting a lot?
22. Astrologers grunt after the first half of mass
23. Laramie may be developed into a seaport

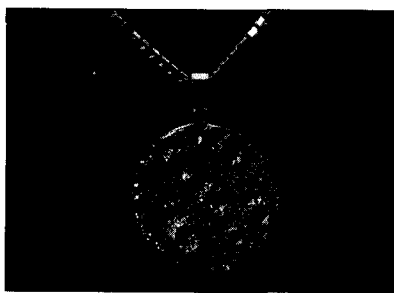
25. Routine adopted by Greek god capable of changing shape
26. Minors team, in essence, displays passion
28. Dance in brown and green?
30. Falls overlooking large vaulted structures
31. Guides together with a hundred males behind barnyard shed
32. Wrong U-turn ruined end of drive
33. Something put around front of runway that's not long enough

### Down

1. Drive into south of wood for secluded community of Hindus
2. Receiving wood with salt, look for a raw deal at a restaurant? (*two words*)
3. Unfinished strip dance
4. Army member, shelled, hit once
5. The woman's right address in Germany
6. Great review garnered by next poem (*two words*)
7. Eastern university with attractive name for a woman
8. Said NFL football player is illegal receiver?
10. Basketlike racket that's French article
12. Each nun is a dogged person
14. Resolved Arab's entire puzzle
17. Art supporter following Monet's *Last Flower*
19. Board game is won by alien with a swelled head?
20. Young lady maintains "Time doesn't run out"
21. Lowest musician's sound
24. Boy I'm returning for Crete's king
25. Prospector's first gold found around recent mesa
27. Spray incapacitating gas on staff
29. Exclamation one censored from Midwest state

**Note:** The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.





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mother and daughter exchange snarls; innate cattiness surfaces; and the climate is a killer. Ms. Prose describes the debacle in elegantly restrained style, creating a novel that is satirically amusing but not unsympathetic. Her women are superficially silly, but their desire for a more generous ethic than society has offered them is not.

### Writing Home

by Alan Bennett.

Random House, 432 pages,  
\$25.00.

**Mr.** Bennett, the author of *The Madness of King George* and of numerous successful television shows, offers a miscellany of memoirs, diary excerpts, occasional pieces, and book reviews, most of the material involving the theater. The diaries are of particular interest, because they describe what the author experiences, notices, and sometimes suffers as one of his television scripts is brought to life on location. He observes that he has "very little knowledge of 'ordinary life.' I imagine it in a script and come up against the reality only when the script gets filmed. So the process can be a bit of an eye-opener. . . ." Such unexpected revelations—and opinions—are frequent rewards in this quirky collection.

### Kate Furbish and the Flora of Maine

by Ada Graham and Frank Graham Jr.

Tilbury House, 170 pages,  
\$30.00.

**Although** technically an amateur, Kate Furbish (1834–1931) was a formidably efficient botanist whose study of the plants of Maine produced admirable illustrations (too few of which are reproduced here in color) and records. Her early work was carried on in the days when stage drivers in Aroostook County kept firearms alongside as a practical policy. It is not explained who the expected bandits were. Furbish was particularly fond of bogs. This agreeably unpretentious biography conjures up, among other visions, the picture of a highly respectable spinster in properly long skirts up to the knee in a mudhole and undeterred in her pursuit of orchids. An odd and charming little book.

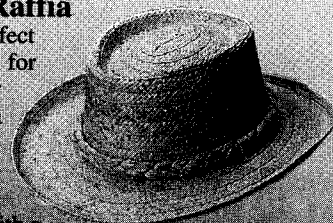
—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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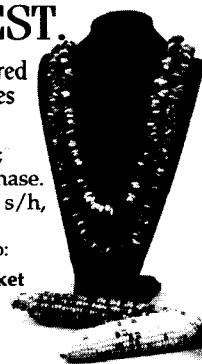
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# WORD WATCH

by Anne H. Soukhanov

**anxious class** *noun*, U.S. workers at all levels of competence and rank who are overworked and affected by the prospect of joblessness, whose wages have failed to increase or even to keep up with inflation, and who may not be valued by their employers over the long term: "A class consciousness may be emerging from . . . shared anxiety—an awareness among millions of Americans that they occupy the same unsteady boat, even if they are doing well in high-paying jobs. Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich . . . describes 'the anxious class' as 'consisting of millions of Americans who no longer can count on having their jobs next year, or next month, and whose wages have stagnated or lost ground to inflation'" (*New York Times*).

**BACKGROUND:** Today's managers, support staff, technicians, and line workers all experience much the same job-related angst. But unlike, for example, Marx's *working class*, the *anxious class* has no identifiable rhetoric or vocabulary, and no designated enemy. "Instead," as the article cited above points out, "business is seen as also a victim, caught in a global competition that forces cost-cutting and layoffs." *Anxious class* is one more item in the growing lexicon of an uncertain business climate; another example, recently explored in this space, is *constant whitewater*, which refers to the relentless turmoil faced by corporate managers.

**Astroturf** *trademark*, used figuratively to denote advocacy advertising, chiefly on local television, that has been created to resemble a grassroots movement and is intended to influence lawmakers indirectly by changing public opinion: "At a time when there is growing distrust of anything emanating from official

*A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.*

Washington, *Astroturf* campaigns have the advantage of offering at least a semblance of populism" (*New York Times*).

**BACKGROUND:** Such "synthetic" grassroots campaigns, engineered by special-interest groups, are modeled on last year's "Harry and Louise" television-ad series, sponsored by the insurance industry, in which a worried couple pored over the Clinton health-care initiative; the series is widely credited with helping to derail public support for the plan. *Astroturf* ads usually depict just-folks characters. For example, in one, sponsored by a tobacco company and an insurance company with a clear stake in tort-law reform, an affable senior citizen proclaimed, "Fewer people nowadays are willing to accept responsibility for

their own doin's. . . I tell you, the system is out of whack." Experts are unsure of the efficacy of *Astroturf* campaigns, but they caution that many more are sure to come.

**fat skis** *plural noun, slang*, double-wide downhill snow skis. Also called *fat boards*; *fatties*; *training wheels*. "Thanks to the invention of *fat skis*, thousands of ordinary skiers are discovering the joy of skiing on powder snow. . . . Because they require far less effort to maneuver in powder and other challenging snow conditions, *fat skis* can add years to a skier's career" (*Wall Street Journal*).

**BACKGROUND:** *Fat skis* were developed by the Austrian ski designer Rupert Huber, who cut a

snowboard down the middle and mounted downhill bindings on each half. Huber had noticed that snowboarders are able to float on powder, rather than "submarining" beneath the surface like inexperienced skiers on conventional skis. *Fat skis*, now in a more sophisticated design, are being used by some ski schools to train beginners; however, they are scorned by most longtime powder skiers, who consider it cheating to use them.

**high-rise cat syndrome** *noun*, the complex of injuries, ranging from pulmonary contusions to limb and dental fractures, sustained by a cat that has fallen from a substantial height: "Indeed, for pets as for humans, summer in the city can be brutal. For this is the season of *high-rise cat syndrome*, when pets plunge inexplicably from 20th-story windows" (*New York Times*).

**BACKGROUND:** More generally called *high-rise syndrome*, since it also has involved dogs, ferrets, a turtle, and even an iguana, this condition goes back in the veterinary-medicine literature to at least 1976, when it was called *high-rise trauma syndrome*. According to one veterinarian who has treated hundreds of survivors, the syndrome occurs chiefly in New York, where the numerous, often un-air-conditioned high-rise buildings frequently lack window screens, because the population of flying insects is paltry. Surprisingly, the farther the fall after a certain point, the lower the mortality rate and the fewer the serious injuries: cats reach their maximum velocity after falling about five stories, and begin thereafter to relax into a horizontal position that slows their fall and distributes the impact. Last summer one cat survived after falling 46 stories, which is believed to be a record.



Illustration by Michael C. Witte

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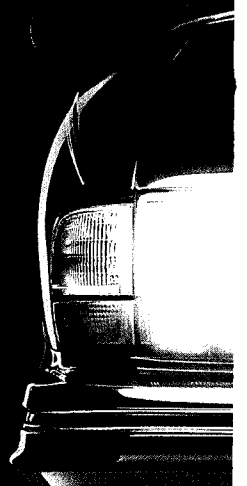
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